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WINTER 2019

MAGAZINE

#Disaster Preparedness

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Luck and Disasters

Seneca wrote that luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. Really, who doesn't want to be lucky?

When I say preparation, the average person's mind goes to dark places of disasters and go-bags. Sure, we must consider that, but preparation can also be about working out or traveling internationally.

We spend much of our lives preparing for what comes next, especially in school where it is often about the next paper, test, or graduation. Raised like that, who can blame us if we sometimes forget to look up. As kids, it is instilled in us that preparation matters. It certainly helps, but the other side of the coin is indefinable anxiety. I sometimes wish every potential disaster came with a go-bag I could stuff to give myself confidence. Then again, there are people who are constantly caught unprepared and lament their bad luck.

The trick is to strike a happy balance. Prepare for the things that matter, or you only get one shot at, and then stop. Instead of imagining the what-ifs, enjoy the preparations you've already made and pat yourself on the back.

Some of the most beautiful moments in life come from the unexpected. Remember to challenge yourself and travel into the unknown. While a little preparation goes a long way, perhaps more important than any single article on preparation is the ability to anticipate and take one or two steps to make tomorrow more comfortable than today. So, enjoy some DIY projects, put a bowl of Pantry Chili on to simmer, turn up your favorite tune, and realize that if today wasn't a disaster, you're doing just fine.

Aren't you the lucky one!



Heather Roulo / *Editorial Director*

Dear SEARCH,

I have prepared two bags in my household for an emergency. We have a designated location to meet, in case we are separated during a disaster. I also have equipped everyone in my household with an emergency contact card, which have family, friends and our local disaster center contact information. My kids call me extreme, but I'm just a mom preparing for when a disaster strikes.

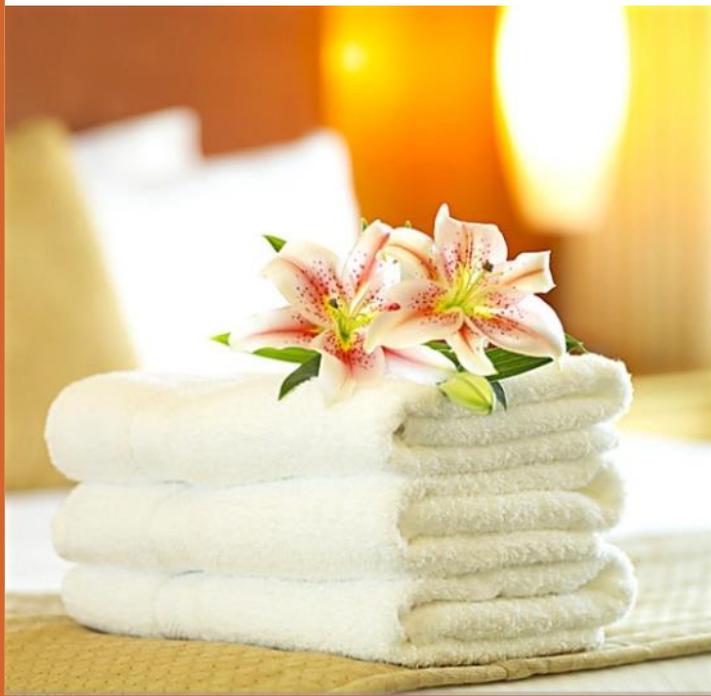
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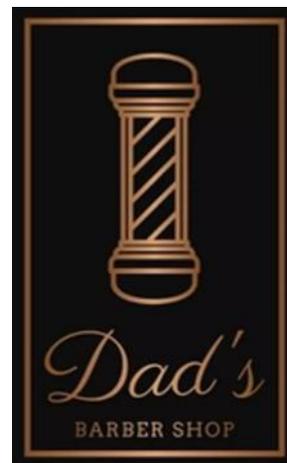
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#DisasterPreparedness

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Ready Set, Go!

Food Truck: Ready To Serve



When disaster strikes, power and water supplies are often damaged. Roads that are washed out by flooding or blocked by debris may prevent the National Guard and the Red Cross from bringing in supplies.

Victims of the disaster and emergency response personnel all require food and water. The newest heroes in disaster relief efforts are the people who own and operate food trucks. From Hurricanes Irma and Harvey and the Las Vegas shooting brought hundreds of food trucks to the front lines of the relief activities without a thought for the costs involved. No one has calculated the financial sacrifice, but scores of individual food trucks set themselves back thousands of dollars, and they're ready to do it again.

The roots of the food truck concept stretch back to the chuck wagons of the wild west. Serving coffee, beans, dried or smoked meat, and sourdough biscuits, chuckwagons followed the cowboys who were on the trail herding cattle for months at a time.

These wagons also formed an essential part of the wagon trains that transported settlers across the country from the east.

With cost-effective cuisine, a billion-dollar industry, the mobile food movement, is bringing prepackaged specialties and freshly cooked delights right to the consumer in both public and private locations with pizza and BBQ chicken as street food mainstays. Food trucks also offer new adventures in ethnic and fusion cuisine, giving foodies a convenient way to experiment with surprising ingredients.

An average meal costs ten to fifteen dollars as food truck owners can keep prices down thanks to lower overhead compared to brick-and-mortar restaurants. Limited menus are also a factor in lower price points. For example, JapaDog's, hybrid hot dogs, mix the classic hot dog with Asian elements such as wasabi and soba noodles.



Social Media is becoming a key factor in the growth of the food truck industry with word of mouth a crucial aspect of building any business. With the mobile nature of the food truck, its exact location can vary from one day to the next and fans posting the locations on social media attract new and regular customers. Checking for local tweets on Twitter's #foodtruck can be the first step toward finding exciting new flavors.

For decades, food trucks have been known as roach coaches, a slang term referring to poor hygiene standards and food that is greasy and/or stale. In truth, food trucks are subject to licensing and permit laws. They are also held to the same food handling requirements brick-and-mortar restaurants must meet. Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., is an expert on nutrition and food safety. On her site, BestFoodFacts.org, Dr. Robinson recommends keeping these questions in mind when considering whether or not a food truck is up to health code standards.

Are the food handlers making change wearing the same gloves they wore when they made your sandwiches or other menu items? If so, that practice could cause cross-contamination.

Temperature issues can be a major concern in mobile food businesses that often serve food during the heat of summer. Do they know the temperature of the food they are serving you? Are they using food thermometers to measure food temperatures? Is hot food served steaming hot and cold food served cold?



Are the food handlers regularly washing their hands?

Taco Tuesday and Food Truck Friday have become popular events among foodies. Public parks, fairgrounds, and farmer's markets can provide a venue for a gathering of food trucks serving the community. Such events bring together people who share a love of good food. Best of all, customers can get up close and personal with the talented chefs preparing their food. The more casual setting allows for easy conversation as people consider their options among the various menus available.

ScienceDaily.com examined a study done by postgraduate students from the University of Michigan and Northwestern. According to Schifeling and Demetry, the growth of food trucks is a prime example of what they call "the new authenticity economy" which is a trend toward favoring unique, eclectic, local and artisanal products.

Food truck owners develop a detailed knowledge of their communities. They know the roads, the neighborhoods, and the traf-

fic flow for both vehicles and pedestrians. When disaster strikes, food trucks become a key resource. They know the best alternate routes for transporting supplies to victims trapped in locations inaccessible by the usual emergency response vehicles. During the wildfires that ravaged Northern California in October 2017, a food truck network answered the call for help. From The Huffing Post: Sonoma County-based food trucks like Fruity Moto, Caribbean Spices and Mai Thai Kitchen are making money at a time when business would normally be slow by dishing out food to locals in need, like senior citizens at nearby residential complexes. Off The Grid supports their efforts by paying trucks per meal out of a GoFundMe campaign that has raised \$32,000 and counting.

Food trucks. Hospitality, brought to us by heroes. ■

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/08/140816204549.htm>.





As Jehovah's Witnesses, my son and I, along with millions of others around the world, attend a regional convention for three days of spiritual food. This is one of the biggest highlights of our year, and we always look forward to it. Many of the brothers and sisters there make gifts to hand out and try to base their gifts on the theme of the convention.

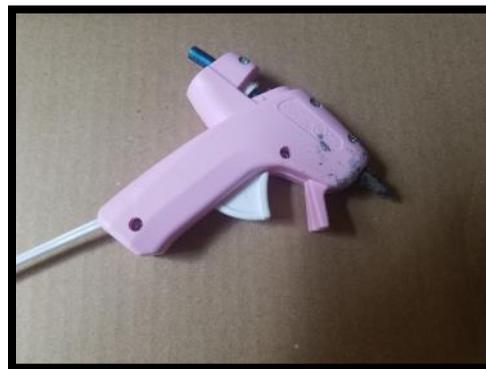
This year the theme was, "Love Never Fails." What better way to show our love than making heart-shaped erasers to pass out?

Of course, you can make these for any reason and in any shape if you can find an appropriate mold. I was a bit skeptical about the idea working at first, but as my sister tried it first, I was able to sample one of hers. Surprisingly they actually work and hold up well. They aren't heavy, and they don't break apart as store-bought erasers do.



Things you will need:

1. Hot glue gun
2. Hot glue sticks (I chose mini glitter glue sticks)
3. Silicon candy mold (any size and shape will work. I chose a heart-shaped mold that made twelve.)
4. Cardboard (to keep glue from getting all over the place)



How to:

1. Plug the glue gun in and let it heat up. Keep the glue gun and other objects over the cardboard, so you don't get glue everywhere.

2. While waiting for the glue gun to heat up, open the glue sticks and lay them out. Having them ready and close to hand makes it much easier to get them into the gun. You'll want to do this fast, so your erasers don't turn out weird and lumpy.

3. When the glue gun is heated, put the glue stick in and wait for the glue to soften before starting, about thirty seconds,. Doing this allows more glue to come out at once and the molds fill faster.

4. Instead of pulling the glue gun trigger, you will want to push the glue stick through all at once. I took my non-dominant hand to hold the glue gun. Then I used my dominant hand to push the glue sticks through. When the glue stick gets too close to the gun to push through take another glue stick and keep pushing. This helps the glue to set more evenly and produces better-looking erasers. If you pull the trigger, it will take longer, and you may end up with very bumpy erasers that aren't necessarily the shape of the mold you're using. How full you fill the molds depends on how large you want the erasers. I filled mine three-fourths of the way.

5. Wait for the glue in the molds to harden and cool. Pop them out and smooth the edges. My son just pulled off the bits and pieces the glue gun strung out, but you could use a pair of scissors to gently snip the edges off and make them even. Snip little bits off at a time, or you'll end up cutting too much and ruining your design.

That's all there is to it. Pretty easy, right? My son and I have enjoyed making these and hope you will too.

Things to keep in mind

Be careful not to touch the metal tip on the glue gun, or you will get burned. The glue gets very hot as well. If allowing chil-

dren to help, make sure they are supervised at all times. Hot glue guns get very hot, and the glue sticks to whatever it touches as it cools. If you get it on your hands, it will trap the heat up against the skin and could produce severe burns.

Do not let the tip of the glue gun stay on the silicon mold for more than a few seconds, or it will melt the mold. That's definitely a mess you want to avoid.

Don't let the glue gun tip sit on surfaces for long periods. It could not only drip the glue to whatever surface it is on, but it can burn through the surface or start a fire.

Do not use the glue gun if the cord is damaged. This could cause an electrical shock or fire.

Quality family time can be hard to come by, and there's nothing better than spending time as a family, making something to brighten someone else's day. So, have fun, get crafting, and enjoy each other's company.■



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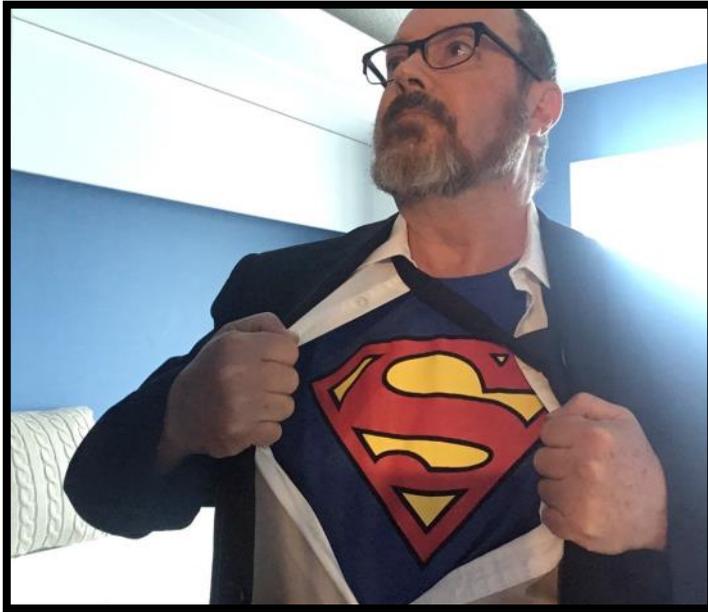


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When I was a teacher, my classroom was on the second floor of a solid, old limestone school facing west. The two of us, whose classrooms had the best views, were responsible for watching for funnel clouds where the tornadoes came from.

If we sounded out the tornado alarm, the entire school population would march to the basement in a semi-orderly fashion with limited screams and tears and hunker down in the corridor, our heads between our knees or something like that.

We were trained. We were ready until, during a parent/teacher interview, we got hit by an earthquake. It was just a little rumble that made the light fixtures swing back and forth for a minute, but we were not prepared.

Since that day, I have been prepared. I was once an elite Boy Scout, a Chief Scout, which is Canada's highest honor for Scouts, about the same as an Eagle Scout in the USA. I know how to be prepared.

I have nine computers, prepared for when I fall into a time vortex and wake up in the 1990s needing a hard-drive-less laptop that runs on DR DOS and floppy disks.

I have ten cameras dating back to 1905, prepared for that same time vortex to drag me back to WWI.

I have 10,000 landscape images on slides, prepared for when my photographic genius is discovered and National Geographic wants to do a non-digital retrospective of life in a mountain resort in the 1990s from one photographer's point of view.

I have four mint-condition Austin Powers action figures, prepared for when eBay decides they are worth more than \$4.99 each.

I have pictures on the walls that should have come down ages ago, but I'm prepared for when my ex drops by again to accuse me of moving on with my life.

I have a hundred autographed books, prepared for when my writer friends all become famous and I can sell the books to fund my retirement.

I have ten pocket-sized foreign language dictionaries for when I travel to Russia, Portugal, and France during the complete failure of the Internet and all digital translators.

I have badminton, tennis, squash, racquetball, and pickleball racquets, all in preparation for the day when I wake up with my rotator cuffs no longer feeling like I pitched a no-hitter against the Yankees.



I have thirty-two-inch waist jeans and medium-sized shirts in preparation for when my ice cream diet, weight-loss-without-exercise plan, starts working.

I have a valid passport in preparation for when I have to travel to Oslo to accept my Nobel Prize for Laziness.

I have a model of the basement renovations I'm prepared to do...when I'm not writing, walking the dog, working, recording an audiobook, eating, sleeping, watching Netflix, or messing around on Facebook.

I have twelve bottles of whiskey from around the world on a lazy Susan in my home office in preparation for when I finally get my house clean enough to have company over for a whiskey-tasting party.

I have a Superman t-shirt and a dark suit, prepared for when Wonder Woman drops by wanting to kick back and chill with the Man of Flab.

Finally, I have fourteen swords of the samurai, throwing, medieval, machete, or film-replica sort placed strategically around the house, prepared for when I have to handle the zombie apocalypse alone because Wonder Woman won't return my calls.

But I still have no freaking idea what to do in an earthquake. ■



Loren Rhoads

SEARCH AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT



Name: Loren Rhoads

Location: San Francisco, California, USA

What made you interested in writing for SEARCH?

SEARCH's previous editor, Emerian Rich, knew I was working on a book called *199 Cemeteries to See Before You Die*, so I offered to show her some of the remnants of the old graveyards in San Francisco. Most people don't know that the cemeteries here were evicted in the early 20th century.

After San Francisco's most elaborate cemetery finally gave up the ghost in the 1940s, some of its lovely stonework was collected by an artist who worked with the Exploratorium (our science museum) to

build the Wave Organ. It's a huge, beautiful creation at the end of the Marina yacht harbor, where you can listen to the ocean gurgle and splash. There's nothing else like it in the world.

I took Emerian there and she asked me to write about it for SEARCH.

What else do you write?

In addition to *199 Cemeteries to See Before You Die*, I've written a memoir about my cemetery travels called *Wish You Were Here*. I've also written a space opera trilogy called *In the Wake of the Templars* and a pair of books about a succubus falling in love with an angel. The first was called *Lost Angels*. The second book, *Angelus Rose*, will be out early in 2020.

What is your website?

LorenRhoads.com



What was your favorite thing to do as a child?

I loved to read! The Bay Area is blessed to have a lot of terrific indie bookstores from Borderlands in San Francisco to Pegasus in Berkeley to the Copperfield's chain (my favorite is the one in Petaluma) to Ink Spell in Half Moon Bay. I can't walk into a bookstore and come out without 2-3 more things to read. ■



There's a chance that my article on music in an issue filled with disaster and preparation could be construed as making light of the serious subject matter. Well, yes, in some ways you could be right, but I think it's fair to say that anyone who comes to this issue from the creative angle, whether it be a filmmaker, novelist, or composer, will always have an element of respect for the source material.

I'm currently writing a novel set in and after World War I, not exactly the proudest moment of human achievement, and I'm always cautious in every chapter and every scene about veering into an exploitative narrative for the sake of entertainment.

The same applies here. With a potential challenge and a dilemma to honor both the hard work that our nation's disaster teams do and the composers who have been commissioned to interpret such events, we're also going to look at the music artists who have used their talents for charitable causes. Surprisingly, it's not as recent a phenomenon as you'd think.

Let's start with Edward Elgar, the com-

poser who, in 1914, composed *Carillon* to support Belgian wartime charities, a country that had just been overrun by German troops. It was so successful he raised money for Polish refugees the next year: *Polonia* debuted at the Queen's Hall in London as part of the Polish Victims' Relief Fund Concert that July.

In 1812, a freak accident almost destroyed the Germanic town of Baden. Fire raged from street to street, jumping from house to house. Wholly unprepared, the township struggled when Beethoven, a man not known for his good temper and politeness, put on a concert to raise funds for its reconstruction.



In the fictional world, fire has always been portrayed—and—rightly so—as an uncompromising force of nature. In reality, bush and forest fires are more commonplace than ever before but rarely portrayed on screen. Instead, Hollywood has seen fit to demonstrate the effects of fire in classics such as 1991's *Backdraft*, where Hans Zimmer created an epic soundscape where Kurt Russell and Robert De Niro fought against an arsonist and burning buildings, and *The Towering Inferno* (1974).

This last movie was scored by John Williams who found a voice amongst the A-list cast who battled faulty wiring in a San Francisco tower block.

Veteran Williams himself is no stranger to the disaster movie genre, putting his distinguished talents to *Earthquake* (also 1974) as well as the more political landscape, that in their own ways incurred national and international concerns, *Amistad* (1997), *Nixon* (1995), and *Lincoln* (2012).

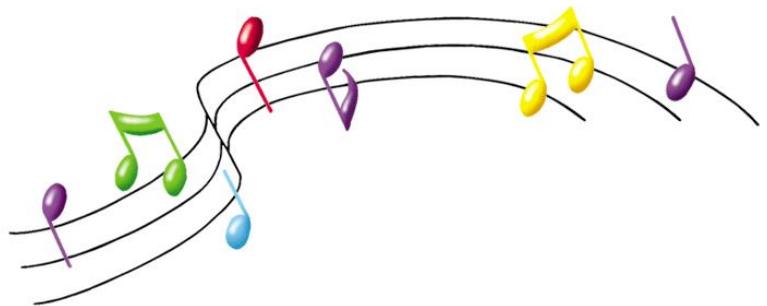
Cliff Martinez, once of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, turned to film scoring in the late 80s and composed for *Contagion* in 2011 for Steven Soderbergh. The movie tapped into the notion of pandemics, and the ensemble cast, including *Marion Cotillard*, *Matt Damon*, and *Gwyneth Paltrow*, worked hard and fast to stamp it out, all to the strains of Martinez's subtle sounds.

One of the biggest world disasters of modern times was the 1984 famine in Ethiopia. It triggered an outpouring of support and donations, mainly due to the efforts of British rock stars *Bob Geldof* and *Midge Ure*. Together, they were instrumental in forming Live Aid, a charity concert in 1985 that brought together top artists of the day such as *Queen*, *Status Quo*, *U2*, *David Bowie*, *The Who*, and *Paul McCartney*. *Madonna*, *Black Sabbath*, *Duran Duran*, and *the Beach Boys* also supported the event. It was unprecedented and raised \$155 million. Today, that figure doesn't seem anything at all, especially when you consider the BBC's Children In Need made \$61.8 million alone in its 2018 telethon

Children have always figured highly in the necessity of fund-raising and support, of course, and in 1749, composer Handel gave a concert to aid completion of London's Foundling Hospital for the "education

and maintenance of exposed and deserted young children" and every subsequent year until his death in 1759, raising a tremendous half million.

We will always have a fascination for disasters, for wanting to be thrilled and spooked in equal measure by stories we either see on the news, streaming, on TV, or in the cinema. There will always be a need for music to bring people together to become aware of the ills of our world, the disasters that befall our fellow persons and us. Yes, we should prepare. Yes, we should be aware, and there should always be a time for us to reflect on events that have happened. How we reflect—whether that's by our own internal thoughts, by sharing our experiences with a wide audience by whatever means, even if one of those means is by diving into the music that comforts us—is entirely up to us as individuals. We just need to make sure, when we can, where we can, that we try to hold out our hand to help whomever we can. ■



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A Brief Walk Through Hanover, PA



Located not too far from Gettysburg and centrally situated between Harrisburg, PA, Baltimore, MD, and Washington D.C. is the town known as the “Snack Food Capital.” If you’ve eaten Snyder’s Pretzels, you’ve most likely noticed the “of Hanover” in the name.

Hanover is a small town and is home to many snack food brands, including Snyder’s, Utz, Wege, and more. On any given day, one can smell fresh potato chips or fresh pretzels on the breeze while sampling a beverage from one of the four microbreweries in town. If coffee is preferred, never fear. Downtown boasts more than a few coffee shops, locally owned and operated, along with the larger, chain coffee companies occupying the shopping plazas along the “Golden Mile.”

If taking a road trip to town, rest assured you will not go hungry. A plethora of restaurants with food ranging from hot dogs and barbecue to Mediterranean and Middle Eastern are all located within a few square miles with many delivery options.

Hanover is filled with original architectural elements and has a rich history dating back to

the Civil War. The Battle of Hanover preceded the Battle of Gettysburg by mere days. Much of the battlefield of Hanover has been built up since the days of the Civil War, but re-enactments are held outside of town.

In this town there are plenty of events to attend, such as game nights at local establishments, the Summer Solstice Party on the roof of the library, Liberty Day (July 4th), trick or treating the Tuesday before Halloween for maximum candy gathering, and Santa’s Cabin on the square starting in November. Don’t forget Dutch Days, the term “Dutch” an evolution of “Deutsch” in reference to the Pennsylvania Germans or PA Dutch.



If not up for a physical visit to Hanover, one can go virtually via the Hanover Area Watch Group (HAWG) and the Complaining About Hanover group (CAH) on social media. Be aware, the admins and members of both groups have been known to get snarky and occasionally an unlikely celebrity is made of a rogue shopping cart. A good sense of humor is a *must* in the virtual spaces, especially when viewing the HAWG slog, a video recap of the top posts in HAWG and Hanover happenings for the week. Spoiler alert: the loud bang was probably fireworks, not gun-■

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4 Spooky Romantic Tales

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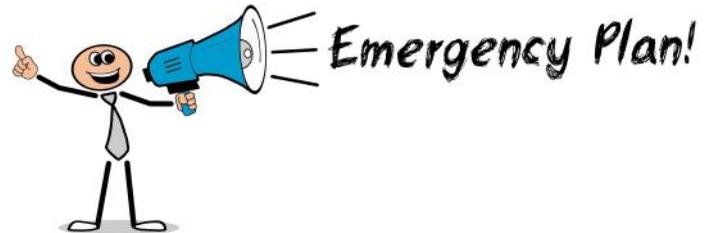
Always Fun! Always Fabulous! Always \$5!

First, share emergency contact names and numbers. It's also wise to think of how you'd egress any building where you spend much time. Consider emergency exits and talk with children about how to leave their bedrooms. Agree on a neighborhood meeting place, such as the mailbox, as well as a local meeting place. Designate an out-of-state-contact to provide someone outside the potential crisis area to coordinate through.



While it's often suggested, you make copies of important documents, such as your driver licenses and birth certificates, these days it may make sense to also create off-site storage for information you may need. Services such as Google Drive or One Drive can hold medical and insurance information, doctor's contact information, and the addresses of places family members frequent. Bicycle accidents, medical emergencies, and nuclear reactor meltdowns don't require the same level of preparedness, but by anticipating the worst scenarios, you're better prepared to meet the smaller challenges that crop up in almost everyone's lives.

Far better to meet the challenge knowing what your resources are and be the hero of the disaster. ■





Disaster can hit at any moment and usually when you least expect it. For this reason it is imperative to be prepared and to have supplies and a plan in place.

This was put to the test with my family shortly after 5pm on October 17th, 1989 when a magnitude 6.9 earthquake rocked the bay area, later dubbed the Loma Prieta earthquake. It was a couple of days before my 13th birthday, and I was focused on the important things in life, while sitting in my backyard, fiercely devouring the latest article on my favorite movie star. All of a sudden, the ground started moving, and it felt like a roller coaster. When it was done, all I could hear was car alarms and my neighbors shouting.

I ran inside and found the house in disarray from things that had fallen off shelves. My parents were okay, and though I didn't

know it at the time, that's when being prepared pays off.

Until that point, I always questioned why my parents stockpiled so many things, such as batteries, canned food, and medical supplies. I didn't after that. We had no electricity, and the phone was dead. It was time to put our plan into action.

My father immediately checked over the house to assess any damage like a broken gas pipe or a water main break that posed potential threats. After that, he went to get a battery-powered radio to listen for emergency broadcast instructions. There were no stations on at first. After a little while, they returned and were giving updates on the status of damage done around the bay area.

When it was time for dinner, we got lucky. Not only did our plumbing still work, but we also had a gas-powered stove that was operational. If the stove hadn't worked, we had a camping stove powered by propane.

My mom used a manual can opener and prepared our meal. We had plenty of canned and dried goods on hand as well as plenty of bottled water, which we ended up not needing.

As night fell, my folks brought out the oil lamps, lanterns, and candles as well as the flashlights. It was a good thing they'd stocked piled a bunch of batteries. After dinner, my father and I went outside with flashlights. Our cat had disappeared. The last time I'd seen her was when I was reading outside, and she was lying near me. I had just noticed a trail of ants going berserk for no apparent reason when she suddenly got up and ran to a nearby ladder that leads to our roof. A couple of minutes later, the earthquake hit. I've heard that animals can sense these things, though

we're not entirely clear as to how. My cat sure knew and headed for higher ground.



It'd then been hours since we saw her. We called her name, and my father searched the roof. Finally, after about ten minutes of searching, she jumped over the fence, coming from one of our neighbor's backyard and ran up to us. She was meowing, and I could tell she was happy to see us. My parents had stockpiled cat food as well to ensure she'd be taken care of in case something happened as well. She ate furiously and then went to sleep in her favorite spot. I was glad to see her and know she was also safe.

Then the phone rang. We were all surprised. We had checked the line earlier, and my mom had tried to dial out, but it was dead. As it turned out, we only had partial

service. We couldn't dial out, but we could receive calls and did the phone start ringing. Family from all over called to make sure we were okay.

We continued to listen to the radio, and as the night wore on, we learned about the devastation, especially in San Francisco. As in earthquakes past, the city was suffering from several fires, and the Marina District was all ablaze. We learned that a portion of the Bay Bridge collapsed as well as the Nimitz freeway. The freeway pancaked, and several people were trapped in their cars. Amid the stories of sadness, there were ones of heroism. Local people by the freeway took in heavy equipment and worked alongside the emergency workers to free the trapped.

As I finished my homework by candlelight that night, I thought about how much worse things could've been. My family and I were safe, the cat was safe, and though messy, our house was still standing. I thought about how, in the blink of an eye, your world can be turned upside down and how important it is to be ready for an emergency. I learned a valuable lesson that day, and it has stayed with me through the years. Even though nobody likes to think about it, emergencies do happen, and as the Boy Scouts say- "Be prepared."■





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ANGELUS ROSE

As Above, So Below: Book 2

Loren Rhoads & Brian Thomas



When we lived in the Sierras, fresh ingredients weren't always available, making it essential to keep our pantry well stocked having canned goods.

We experienced many a snowy day when people would make it into work, but were reluctant to leave for lunch, so we would prepare our Pantry Chili for anyone unwilling to venture out of the building. We accepted donations for the next day's chili and would stop when the monies ran out. Mysteriously, they ran out about the same time the weather cleared.

Pantry Chili is ideal for snow days or during disasters when you still have power. All the main ingredients come from your pantry and can be set up ahead of time. When necessary, just assemble the ingredients in a slow cooker to have a warm meal ready for those returning from dealing with the complications of bad weather.

INGREDIENTS

Ingredients - Spice Mix

- *8 tablespoons Chili powder
- *2 tablespoons Dehydrated onion
- *1 tablespoon Garlic salt
- *1 tablespoon Ground cumin,
- *1 tablespoon Dried oregano,

Ingredients - Chili

- *3 cans Tomatoes, stewed, 14.5 ounce
- *3 cans Kidney beans, dark, 15 ounce
- *1 cube Knorr Beef Bouillon (optional)
- *1 tablespoon Brown sugar (optional)

Optional toppings

- *Tabasco hot pepper sauce
- *Grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- *Sour cream

After hours spent shoveling, sandbagging, and/or securing homes, a warm bowl of chili is a welcome treat.

With numerous years of experience with slow cookers, we've made many wonderful dishes. We've also experienced the full scope of disastrous slow cooker events, such as non-working cookers, unplugged cords, cookers not turned on or turned to wrong cooking temperatures, burns, broken ceramic pots, broken lids, and scorched tables. So in our recipes, we include instructions and recommendations on how to avoid slow cooker disasters. If you're an experienced slow cooker chef, these extra instructions are likely unnecessary, but for others they'll help to prevent slow cooker disasters that can ruin cookers, counters, tables, and your meal.



Preparation - Spice Mix

*In a medium-size bowl add chili powder, dehydrated onions, garlic salt, ground cumin, and dried oregano.

*Mix spices until well blended.

*Place spice mixture in an air-tight storage jar/container.

*When done you should have seasoning for 2 more batches of chili.

Preparation

*Set slow cooker in a safe place on the counter, where heat from the cooker will not damage surroundings.

*Plug cooker into an appropriate electrical socket. It's recommended that you NOT use an extension cord because they can overheat from the power draw of the cooker.

*Verify cooker is functioning by turning the power to high for a short time until you feel the warmth inside the cooker bowl by touching it with your hand. It's disheartening to put food in a slow cooker and return hours later to discover it hasn't been cooking all that time.

*Ensure slow cooker power is off during the remaining preparation and that the cover

has been removed to a safe location where it will not get broken.

*Using a can opener, open cans of stewed tomatoes and kidney beans. Warning: can lids can be very sharp when removed from cans.

*Pour the contents of the cans (including the liquids) into the slow cooker.

*Carefully place can lids back into cans before disposal to help prevent trash bags from being cut by the lids and/or injury to persons disposing of bags.

*Add 4 1/2 tablespoons of the spice mixture to slow cooker.

*As an option, take beef bouillon and dissolve in 1/4 cup boiling water. Add beef broth and optional brown sugar to slow cooker.

*Stir spices into tomatoes and kidney beans.



Cook

*Place cover on cooker and ensure it's fitted well to cook. If the cover is loose, steam and heat will escape from the gap and increase cook time.

*Pre-heat the food by setting the cooker heat to high for 15 minutes.

*Select your continued cooking temperature depending on when you plan to serve the food.

□ Set to High - cooks for 4-5 hours with cover on. Cooks 1 hour with cover off to thicken.

□ Set to Low - cooks for 7-8 hours with cover on. Cooks 1 hour with cover off to thicken.



*Please note that various brands and models will require different cook times. Please adjust the heat and time to match your own slow cooker.

*Warning: Every time the cover is removed during the covered cook time, the cooking time is extended. When removing the hot cover, be sure you put it in a place that won't be damaged by it.

*We recommend you leave the cover on until reaching the end of the covered cook time, before opening the cover to check if the chili beans have achieved a softened texture.

*When beans are soft and mixture still watery, remove the cover and make sure heat is set to high. Stirring occasionally, break up tomatoes and cook until chili reaches desired thickness (about 1 hour or longer for thicker chili).

*When done, beans should be soft and mixture thickened.

*Remember: Turn cooker off and unplug from the electrical outlet when chili has completed cooking.

*Prepare a location to place the hot cooking pot. To prevent the ceramic pot from chipping, cracking, or breaking, I lay down several silicone hot pads on the tile counter to set the pot on.

*Allow time for the pot to cool enough to

safely move using hot pads. Carefully remove the cooking pot from the cooker and set on a soft heat-resistant surface.

Serve

*Chili may be served from the slow cooker pot directly or placed in a heat resistant bowl. Just be sure you place adequate heat protection between the serving dish and the table.

*Dish chili into bowls and let diners add any of the suggested toppings.■



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**DON'T LET THE HOLIDAYS WEIGH YOU DOWN
5 TIPS TO KEEP YOU FIT DURING THE
HOLIDAYS**

'Tis the season to be healthy! The holidays are here once again: the parties, the work events, and the family gatherings with late nights, early mornings, decadent food, desserts, and drinks. Some of us just can't wait. The rest of us may be in panic mode, thinking about how we can maintain our fitness goals during the holidays. We can do it. There are ways we can still maintain our goals and yet have a good 'ole time during the holidays.

Don't stress. It's time to 'fest'. The following are helpful tips to help you maintain fitness goals during the holidays:

1. Create Healthy Habits

Let's try to follow a regular routine of proper exercise and sleep. Though it might be tempting to stay up late every night to watch our favorite movie or to celebrate with family and friends, we still have to get enough sleep. It has been found through various studies that lack of sleep can be associated with weight gain. Set goals that are attainable, realistic, and specific and then follow through.

2. Pre- Festivities

Before party time, eat a healthy small meal before the event. This helps alleviate "zombie eating", unconsciously eating snacks all through the night at the event or holiday party. Foods that are packed with fiber are ideal options to keep you fuller longer and also help you maintain a healthy weight.

3. Exercise Daily

To maintain our fitness goals, we need to remain active and really try to exercise every day if possible or three times a week. I know it'll be a challenge. I'll be in the fight with you. Let's make a promise to ourselves that during the holidays, we won't just spend time eating and partying here and there, but we'll get our regular exercise in. Make a co-worker, friend, or family member an accountability partner and invite them to workout with you. Make it rewarding for all involved.

4. Avoid Stress

The holidays can be stressful with family drama, finances, work flow conflicts, and more. Too much stress can, unfortunately, trigger increased cravings and eating. To maintain our fitness goals during holidays, avoid stress with exercise, quiet time, breathing exercises, and meditation.

5. Remain Positive

Holiday or not, remain positive always. Re-frame your relationships with foods and tell yourself positive affirmations. Remember that healthy minds pave the way for healthy habits.

Follow these tips, and you are sure to maintain your fitness goals

Happy Holidays to you and yours from Gymnanigans Boxing Fitness & Strength Training





School can be particularly challenging for neurodivergent people who have autism, anxiety disorders, and other problems that can lead to sensory overload. How do you keep yourself from being overwhelmed?

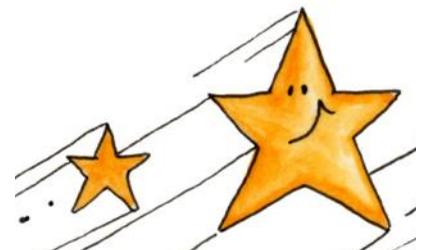
Time Management

Having a binder with a daily, weekly, and monthly planner or a calendar on your wall, or even both can help you with doing your best in school. Most schools offer a free one at registration if you start early enough. The Dollar Tree and 99 Cent Stores have them, and you can get 18 or 12-month calendars. There are also online calendars such as Google Calendar or iCalendar. Many phones have a calendar and an alarm you can set to help you get up on time and remember classes. Get to class early rather than late to avoid anxiety. That way you can get a seat while there are fewer people and have time for a video game or meditation to relax before class.

Brain Food

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and for students, your first meal should be filled with protein. Sugars and caffeine give a short term burst of energy but may leave you lagging around 3pm when the effect wears off. Avoid carbo-loading, because that cereal turns into sugar later in the day. Instead, try eggs or a vegetable protein like soybeans, pumpkin seeds, or edamame.

Avoid the mid-afternoon doldrums with high quality, low poly-saturated fat protein such as sunflower seeds or peanuts. Stay hydrated. Take your vitamins in the morning and take some extra vitamins and protein powder or energy food bars with you during the day instead of low-nutrition vending machine snacks and coffee.



Organize and Communicate

Get multiple contact numbers and email addresses from other students, so when you miss a class, it is easier to catch up. Get your teacher's contact information. Get a copy of the syllabus and make a note of any important dates on the calendar. Go to the book store and order all of the books and workbooks you need several weeks in advance to be ready for class. Get with both your disability counselor and your regular academic counselor's to make a plan for your school semester. Prepare a schedule and start a few weeks before your first class so that you can get in the groove before you need to actually study. Get your Financial Aid and Extended Opportunity Programs set up before classes start.

Stay Well Rested

Get plenty of sleep before school days. Issues like poor concentration and anxiety are worse when you are low on sleep. Take ten-minute breaks every forty minutes when studying. This gives our brain time to refresh. Identify relaxing places on campus where you can take time out when you need to. Some campuses have outdoor areas with picnic tables or grassy lawns where you can chill and refresh. Others have a small student café that is quieter than the main cafeteria. The Student Union Building may have low stimulation areas connected with clubs or in the general study area where you can hang out, rest, and study. Get a map of the area surrounding the campus and find out where local parks and coffee house are where you can take a break from stimulating things on campus and rest your mind.



Pace Yourself

Try to break multiple day assignments, tests, and projects into daily chunks. That way you can know if you are running behind schedule earlier or not. Pacing yourself also includes being unashamed to take a reduced course load if you need to. Remember it's fine to be proud of getting a degree even if it takes you longer. Make proper use of the disabled school services. Never feel bad for doing what you need to thrive.

Get permission to use a note taker, have accommodations such as extra testing time and a quiet test room, or a recording device if you need one. Do extra credit when available as you never know when you might need it, such as during a verbal report when your anxiety or pain is badly distracting. It is better to take out extra time to ensure success than to push yourself too hard and fail. ■

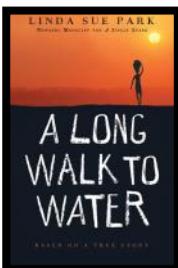
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No matter what I scored on my ACT, or how many Ted Talks I listened to, or how many glasses of iced tea I drank with my grandmother in the garden while snapping raw green beans, nothing truly prepared me for the big moments in life. I mean really, why didn't someone tell me about all the curve balls life throws?

From standing up to the school bully to standing up to my boss, sleeping while the baby sleeps, to sleeping in my bed alone after a breakup? (The key is to sleep in the middle of the bed surrounded by pillows for that last one, by the way.) Here are five of the best books I know to help prepare anyone for this unreasonable and beautiful thing called life.

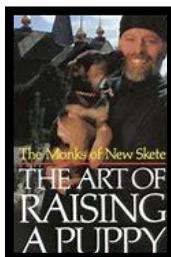
Prepare For Puberty by reading *A Long Walk To Water* by Linda Sue Park.



Based on the true-life story of two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, any teenager (or adult for that matter) will learn to appreciate the small but good things in life. The inspiration I derived from their choices and means of survival made me want to

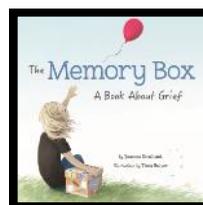
buy copies and put them in every free, little library box in my hometown. I'm grateful that this book made it into my hands and feel it's the perfect read to quell a bit of the growing angst inside every teen.

Prepare for Adulting by reading *The Art of Raising A Puppy: New Skete Monks*

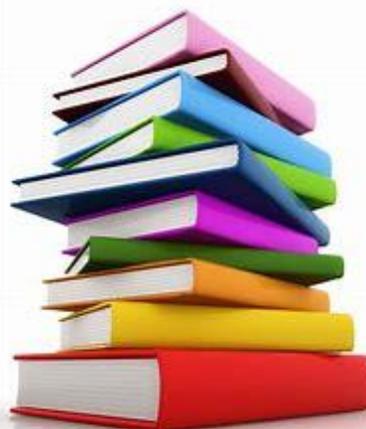


Nothing taught me more about responsibility, as a young woman, than the act of loving and owning a dog. The Skete monks have been training dogs for decades within the walls of their New York-based monastery. Their how-to guide is filled with practical advice, colorful photographs, and insight on what dogs (and humans) need to do to bond.

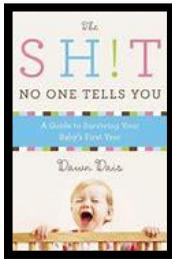
Prepare for Loss by getting a copy of *The Memory Box* by Joanna Rowland.



Notice how I said, get a copy. I didn't say read. A short time ago, I stumbled upon this book. Thumbing through it, I could feel myself agreeing vehemently with beautiful unfolding of each page as it takes a person (child or adult) through the delicate grieving process. I wish I would have had it when my father and best friend passed away. This is the kind of book you buy and set on your shelf.

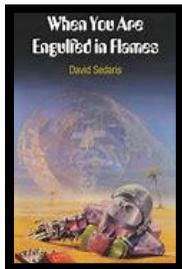


Prepare for Motherhood by reading *The Sh!t No One Tells You About Motherhood: Surviving Your Baby's First Year* by Dawn Dais



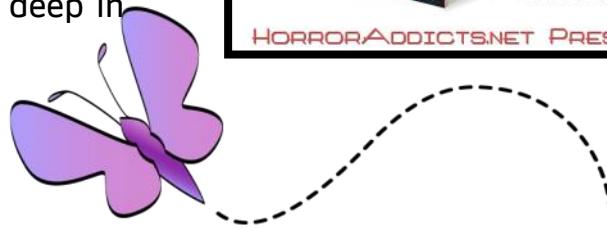
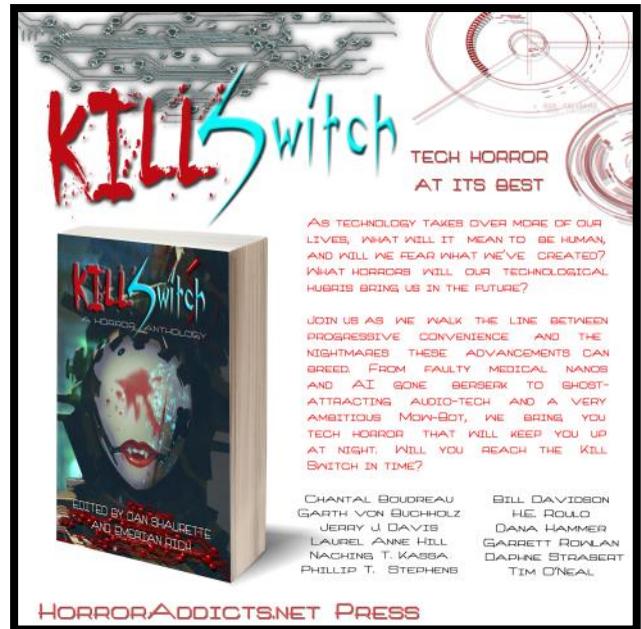
Motherhood might force you to burst into fits of sleep-deprived, delirious laughter but so will this book. Practical advice is sandwiched between hilarious, real-life anecdotes from the author. Encouraging and uplifting, it's become my new go-to baby shower gift.

Prepare To Laugh While The World is Crashing All Around You by reading *When You Are Engulfed In Flames* by David Sedaris.



I've listened to David Sedaris read his essays on radio shows on NPR and on podcasts like This American Life. He always made me laugh. Buried deep in

a very dark and difficult Michigan winter, I picked up a copy of this book, hoping it might snap me out of my funk. While it wasn't the cure-all, it definitely helped me make that first critical step towards the light of spring. I love satire. Sedaris is a master. ■



PLAGUE MASTER: REBEL INFECTION
BY H.E. ROULO



Trevor's return from the zombie infection makes him unique. It also makes him dangerous.

He's a hero on his homeworld, celebrated for finding a vaccine against the zombie virus, but the ruling Founders don't trust him and his low origins. When the revolution comes, Trevor is caught in the middle.

Despite his homeworld's troubles, a message from a Plague Master forces Trevor to seek reinforcements. He hunts for Kristin, the woman he left behind, and an answer to why the vaccine is failing.

He and his friends must fight on space stations and worlds overtaken with infected to discover the terrible truth about his cure.

3 Beauty Subscriptions

 When most people talk about their go-bag, they're thinking water, food, a change of clothes, and medications. Things to carry them over in case all electricity and emergency services go down.

For me, I think instantly of makeup. After all, I can't be caught make-up-less during the apocalypse! Not having makeup as a part of my morning routine will throw my sense of self completely out the window. Let's be honest, most of us won't ever use our go-bags for the big zombie plague that wipes out half the planet. We might need them for localized emergencies like a flood, fire, or earthquake. In those situations, you will still need to be presentable, and for heaven's sake, moisturized.

What a better way to have makeup always on hand than to have a beauty subscription? But, it's hard to know which one to choose, and for most of us, we don't want to throw our hard-earned money away on the chance that we picked the right one. Here's some insight into my top three, why I liked them, and why I didn't, so you can make an informed choice.



ipsy
...beauty by you



IPSY: Every month, you get a cute little bag designed to match their theme and five products to try.

* It's one of the cheaper beauty subscriptions, so you don't feel like you're spending a ton of money every month.

* You get to try out a whole bunch of different kinds of makeup from companies you may not have purchased from before and find new products that might become your favorites. You also get deals on their featured products if you fall in love with something and want more.

* Reviewing items and referring new customers adds up points that allow you to get extra makeup in your bag.

* Although you do fill out a beauty quiz, they won't follow it to a T. For example, I am allergic to perfumes and although I have scents unchecked on the quiz, I still get them. However, before you discount them for it, most beauty subscriptions do not even allow for customer choice.

* After a while your house starts filling up with makeup bags you can't possibly ever use in your lifetime.

* Samples can be pretty small, and I started feeling like they were giving me the same thing all the time.

ALLURE: This box is themed and chosen by the magazine. It contains more beauty products rather than makeup.

- * The best thing about this box is that they give you larger than normal samples.
- * You get to try out all kinds of different companies because they focus on one part of beauty a month. So, the items you get are pretty specialized and from beauty companies that you may not have tried before.
- * There is no beauty quiz, and you cannot pick what you're going to get each month. If you don't like masks, too bad. You get seven of them that month. This is great for the months that you really like but each box can be hit-and-miss because of the specialization.



MEDUSA MAKEUP: This is the best box for the makeup fanatic. It's also cruelty free and vegan. If that's important to you, this is the company to support.

- * I really like the way this company decides on their theme and goes for it. There's always an extra item in the box that is unique and you will never find anywhere else. For example, in their summer vacation theme box, they included a keychain that looks like a hotel key from the 1980s. Imaginative, personal touches like that keep me subscribed.
- * The makeups that come in this box are for the adventurous makeup fan.
- * If you're into skin care or other types of beauty products this box may not be for you. It centers on makeup.
- * All the makeup is from Medusa, no other companies. So, you don't get the variety to try new things.

To sum up, all the boxes have their pluses and minuses. My advice is try them out and find your favorite. Beauty subscriptions can save you money because they charge \$12 to \$20 a month, but you're getting products in each box worth \$30-\$60. If you do subscribe, I encourage you to set up a trade system with people who live near you so you can trade things you won't use. This has been a fun activity for me and my friends. At the end of the year, we pack up the non-expired trades into Ipsy bags and donate them to an underprivileged beauty supply program. ■





Travel time! You are ready to take your first trip away from your home country? You have watched travel shows on PBS and seen online videos. Maybe you even want to try and make your own travel channel. International Airports will take on a whole new meaning for you.

Let's look at some things you will want to consider and research.

Passport: It can take a while to obtain one of these in the US, so don't delay getting the process started. You can get the application paperwork online to fill out and even take your own pictures to send along, Just be sure to follow the instructions carefully to avoid any delays. Use a sheet over a door for your background when taking the picture, and pay attention to the sizing requirements. If you are not comfortable with that, check with your post office for passport services. There is a small fee for them to do the picture, but you know it will be done right.

Visas: No, not the credit card. Some countries you might travel to will require a visa. Check with the embassy or other government offices BEFORE booking your trip. Also note, some countries require you to have proof of a return ticket to your home country before you can gain entry. Brazil is one of those, in case you were thinking of Carnivale.

The internet lets you do all sorts of research before you ever leave home. Make use of it. Just be sure to use official govern-

ment sites for information on entering the country, how much currency you are allowed to carry in or out, restrictions on things you can take with you, and length of stay.

Don't forget to check your home country return policies. The US permits some things in limited quantities but has total bans on several products. You do not want to buy a fortune in souvenirs only to find they cannot come into the country. Be prepared to pay duty tax on certain things if they are over the allowed amount per person returning home or even traveling to. Many countries will tax you on things you bring in if they feel it is more than you need for your stay in their lands. Again, check those websites for restrictions and amounts you can take with you.

Take the time to be aware of local cultural traditions, bargaining, tipping, social interactions. The last thing any traveler should want is to be seen as a rude or boorish tourist. This website can be helpful; <http://guide.culturecrossing.net/>

Some folks like to travel with a goal or purpose in mind, helping kids in undeveloped countries or help a school with supplies or books. Be sure to check with organizations in those countries before filling your bag with things you think they might need. Too often, people mean well but end up bringing things that the recipients really cannot use. There is a group that helps provide medical supplies, <https://njt.net/>, to developing countries. Above all, enjoy your travels. Expand your knowledge about places, people, and things. Get those country stamps in your Passport. ■



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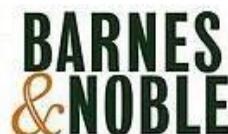
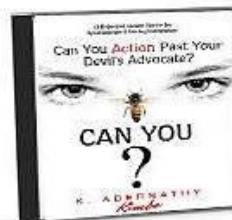
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