

Cash-less Society

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Chapter 1

I am a prepper but I am also a practical guy. So I never went overboard on the whole prepping thing. Instead I just very gradually did some of what I thought were very reasonable preparations. I bought and stored extra food and I kept extra cash at home along with carrying a fair amount of cash all the time in case of some kind of emergency. All those preparations cost really nothing. The money was earning almost no interest in the bank so having it at home or in my pocket did not cost much of anything. Obviously, we would eat the extra food so that did not cost us any extra.

But as time went on my wife and me kind of got more on-board with the prepping thing simply because we saw our world going downhill. The biggest direst change was that our dream home or our retirement home that we had built was great but the neighborhood deteriorated a lot and showed no signs of ever getting better. It was time to get out of there before home prices in our fell. We had built that home before we got into the prepper thing.

So we started a search for a new place to live. Our dream home had been built in a small community of mostly retired people. Over ten years as the retired folks passed away their homes were mostly all turned into rentals. Many of the renters were quite undesirable. There was no way anyone could predict just how a community would evolve in the future so our decision was to live well out in the country with distant neighbors. Far enough out away from any larger town so rental houses would be impractical.

That was the major requirement for our new location. We also decided that we would have our own well along with enough land so no one could build real close to our

new home. Also, we wanted some land to have a big garden if we wished and maybe some chickens too, whether we ever did have those two things or not at least we wanted that option available.

There were several other wants for our new home but we were both practical and realized that buying any home was always going to include some compromises. So we started our search covering several states because nothing was holding us anywhere. I worked from home so all I needed was a good internet connection.

There was not an immediate rush but we did think we wanted the property that already had a house instead of building one. If possible we wanted that house to be as new as possible so the chance of building issues would likely be minimal.

We both spent considerable time on the internet real estate sites looking at literally hundreds of properties. When we found something promising we drove there and viewed that house and every other likely house nearby. We put on a lot of miles and kept coming up dry on our search.

Then we looked at four houses in an area because one we thought was the 'one'. It turned out not to be and the other three were not very interesting either. We drove back home. Over the next week, we talked together a lot and finally went back to look again at one of those four houses. The house did check off many of our requirements. We looked and plotted what we could do to make that house work for us and finally made a very low-ball offer. We did make it plain that we would not negotiate and this would be our only offer. It was accepted by the sellers and the rest, as they say, is history.

We did a lot of work to the property, had two outbuildings built, and worked on the house interior ourselves. It was then good enough. And we were mostly happy with our decision to purchase the place. The closest

neighbor was over a half-mile away and we became good friends. Everyone in the general area accepted us and all were friendly. After three years our orchard was growing well and we had a couple of good crops from our gardens that we put in each summer. We had no chickens but were still thinking about getting some. Life was good.

But the state of our nation and the state of the world had us very concerned. Every country and every government entity had a mountain of debt. And regular people also had mountains of debt. And we knew there was one ironclad rule –all debt had to be paid by either the debtor or the lender. Neither of us knew what else we could do to prepare for a debt collapse so we just went on with our lives and watched the news closely. While not really young we were still in pretty good health and we started being outside more and getting more exercise to help bolster our health. We thought being in better physical shape couldn't hurt anyway.

Then there came the virus. On the news, it was called the novel coronavirus. That really was not a name because novel in this case just meant 'new' and coronavirus was a common class of virus. Really common because that is what the common cold was too. Some called this the Kung Flu or the China Flu because it started in China then later the official name was changed to Covid-19 but few regular people used that name.

It immediately became a very big deal in China. Though the stated death toll was very low, China took very extreme steps to try and control this new virus. They quarantined huge areas of their country. And in those areas took drastic measures to enforce those quarantines. These actions seemed very bizarre compared to the very minor number of deaths reported. Of course, the quarantines did not work and the virus spread. Soon it was in most other countries due to all the international travel.

China kept expanding and expanding their quarantined areas. Because of these quarantines production in China plummeted and shipments in and out of China almost came to a total standstill. The economic impact to China and therefore the whole world had to be a huge negative but the full impact worldwide might not be known for months or even well over a year. When the virus came to America and was spreading far and wide here we self-quarantined and just stayed home. Before doing so we had added greatly to our stored food and other items. We seldom went to town shopping anyway so for us it was not that big of a deal.

Many people got the virus here in America and most other countries around the world. Some people died from it but surprisingly few. It was difficult for our government to come up with the number who died from this particular virus because they never had a good test for it. Our grown children got the flu or maybe this new virus and each missed a few days of work but that was it. In this country, the new virus was similar to the regular flu that almost everyone had suffered from in the past. The virus did kill many older folks but that is what the yearly flu always did every year anyway. My wife and I never got sick this year. Our self-quarantine lasted about three months though we did get many things delivered here just like always. When we finally started going to the local town shopping we wore thin gloves like the ones doctors wear for the first couple of trips and then we stopped even doing that too.

Eventually, the death toll here in America was stated at twenty-five thousand. And the death toll for this year's regular flu was called in at seventeen thousand which was about average. It was a similar story in most other countries too. It turned out to be mostly a nothing burger. It looked big but had no meat to it. Countless people on the news said we dodged the bullet.

But did we? China sure didn't dodge any bullets because eventually, the real death toll numbers came out and if these new numbers were actually true that country ended up with almost a million dead (and many thought that number was still likely only a fraction of the real number of deaths).

Obviously, I had no idea just how many died over there but I, along with everyone else, could see some of the economic results. There were shortages of countless 'made in China' items along with shortages of many other manufactured products because many things contained at least a few parts that were made in China. Electronic items were by far the hardest hit. Companies were trying desperately to resource parts from other countries. Some companies just filed for bankruptcy. Actually many companies did so but some of those just got re-organized and never closed down completely.

Pretty much the whole world was suffering an economic downturn. The world was in a recession. The countries that could lowered interest rates. Here in America, the Federal Reserve lowered many times until we were sitting at zero interest rates, the lowest in our history. And that was still now enough to boost us out of recession. During this time the Federal Reserve, like most other central banks, was doing Quantitative easing where they injected fresh new money into the banks. They had done this before in the last recession with little results and we're getting the same results this time around too.

Chapter 2

For the most part, my wife and I could care less about electronic gadgets so that shortage meant nothing to us. Over summer we had our best producing garden to date at our new place and our young orchard started to produce some fruit in the fall. For us things were great and I even completely retired when I was old enough to start getting Social Security. We were far from rich but we lived very frugally and had no payments so the government checks every month were enough for us to live on and we had a couple of good IRAs in case things changed and a bunch of money in savings for any emergencies.

I should mention that through all of this world stock markets obviously had some ups and downs but not much for downs. Currently, they are all, I think, at record highs again. Rather odd I would think with the world-wide economic loss due to the virus. I know the DOW here in America had to swap out two of the member companies because those companies were really suffering from the effects of the virus. But as for the stock markets it was situation normal; always going up.

That was when the talk started and things started happening in Europe. They were switching to a total cashless society. Apparently, things had been in the works for a while over there because they had it all planned out and had the required equipment either already on hand or in the pipeline and it would soon all be available. I honestly did not pay all that much attention to it because I stupidly thought it would have no direct effect on me. I was one hundred percent wrong.

Even before it was implemented in Europe, it was being talked up in our media and our Congress was

debating doing this too. There was really very little in the way of debates and Congress voted to adapt our country to a totally cashless society too. The bill was passed by a very large by-partisan vote. It was not signed into law by our President but he did allow it to become law by just letting it sit on his desk the required time. If he would have vetoed the bill Congress could have easily overcome his veto because they had plenty enough votes. So then it was law.

The law had several steps to it before it was completely implemented. When completed all US cash would become totally worthless. Items would be priced in dollars as it was now but there would just be no printed paper dollars. Everything would be electronic. It started to be rolled out.

Most people had debit cards and those could still be used, at least for a while. Most people had smartphones and some of those could be used for all transactions, even between private parties with a new app. For those with no smartphone or who did not want to use their phone for any transactions, there was now a new device. It was about half the size of a smartphone. Its only use was for money transactions.

The new device had a smartphone touch screen and a built-in camera. It also had a built-in fingerprint reader. Each of these new devices was permanently tied to only one person and could never be used by any other. The device used its built-in camera for facial recognition and the reader your fingerprint. Once those two things were imprinted into each device they could never be changed, it was a one-time operation that could not be repeated so they were no good if stolen and that part of the device could never be hacked. Supposedly it was therefore totally secure. This supposed fact was constantly repeated.

Each device had an on-screen touchpad but only for amounts. If you were buying something at a yard sale or at

a grocery store you activated your device using your bio-input so it verified it was indeed you and then you just entered the amount to be transferred. Next, you held your device next to someone else's device or the store's reader. The transaction was instantaneous.

These new devices were not for sale. You got yours from your bank. It was initialized there to bond with only you at that time after the bank made very sure of your identity. Same if you had a compatible smartphone with a fingerprint reader. You went to your bank and downloaded the special app there. Then while in the bank the phone was tied to you only, at least as far as for transactions. Regular phone usage could still be done by anyone using your phone. At that point, you used your phone for your transactions but you still had to verify each time using the biometrics that it was you using the phone before each and every transaction.

They had even planned ahead far enough to have a larger device that was easier for older people to use or the handicapped. The use of the device could not be any simpler because the only thing you entered was the transaction amount and nothing else.

No one ever received a check for working and instead just a deposit was made into your bank account. Jobs that were normally paid in cash were now done with the new transaction devices. There was no age limit on these devices so the kid you hired to mow your grass could be paid using his transaction device. Same when you paid for that box of Girl Scout Cookies to the little girl on your doorstep. Gradually these devices were now being just called wallets. And everyone had to carry these wallets with them. Always.

It was repeated a million times by the media how safe this was in use. Money could no longer be stolen because there was no cash money, only electronic transactions. Scams were severely limited because to

receive or use any funds both parties had to have their identities positively verified. Therefore any scammer could be easily caught and brought to justice.

You could still use your phone (with the new app) to order and pay for any goods or services. Transactions could still be done by computer for orders to be delivered because the new transaction devices had a USB port so the identity verification could still be done. Very fast, really easy, and totally worry-free, at least according to Congress and the media.

After three months of mixed usage of both cash and cash-less, the cash was then phased out. All cash had to be turned into your bank, both paper money and coins. Everyone had two months to turn in their cash for the full value (this had been announced at the time the trial period started so really everyone had five months to turn in all their cash and coins). Anyone could keep their cash and coins of course but after that date, those items would only have sentimental value.

There was a fee for every transaction but it was surprisingly small. Ten cents for all amounts under ten dollars and a very gradual rise for larger amounts. No one complained about the transaction fees to any great extent. But when the next step took effect there were many complaints.

We already had zero interest rates for quite some time and now that changed. All money left in your bank account for more than thirty days accrued fees each month. So basically any savings you had that you used to receive interest on at the bank now instead were negative interest so that saved money cost you every month unless you used it all up. Every month you had thirty days to use all your 'new' money from the time of deposit or the bank would charge you interest on that money every single day after that thirty-day grace period. For those people who lived paycheck to paycheck, they never were charged any

interest fees and only had to pay the small transaction fee each time they paid for something. It was a big push to make everyone spend all their money as fast as they received it.

Of course, there were exemptions. Money in any retirement account was never charged any negative interest, though it was now way more difficult to access the money in those accounts. Money in brokerage accounts was never charged any negative interest. There were just a few other exemptions that were only very gradually revealed to the general public.

Bank statements were never printed out on paper anymore because everyone had instant access to their bank account amount on their transaction devices at any time day or night. There were never any 'transactions pending'.

I did not like this big change and I believe a large number of my countrymen did not like this change either though no negative sentiments were ever expressed on or by any of the media. I expected many more big changes were in our future and I fully expected that those changes would be bad for the American people. I sure hoped I would not be proved right.

Chapter 3

Now all the money that we had in savings was costing us money every month. We now had no cash at home because we had to turn it all into our bank before it became totally worthless (I had done this over several months instead of just in one large transaction). We now had a fair amount of money in the bank and therefore it was costing us a fair amount of that money every month just to have it in the bank. We had to either spend that money or lose it (as was our government's plan from the beginning).

We increased our preps a huge amount. I felt sorry for the delivery drivers that had to deliver all the stuff we ordered to have on hand. My wife and I had talked many times about getting solar power for our little homestead but because it was a very poor choice financially we never did it. Now we did and we bought a much larger system than we had ever thought about before.

We had a twenty-foot shipping container delivered to our place to help hold all the extra items that we were having shipped in to us. We also bought many other things locally just trying to use up at least most of our 'extra' money. I even bought a large amount of lumber supplies to have on hand. We bought and bought until we could think of nothing else to buy. We even had a good-sized flock of chickens now in our new large and very well-made chicken coop with a large amount of chicken feed on hand. Everything we bought we tried to buy the best or most durable.

I have always had several guns just because I liked guns. Now I had more and a literal ton of ammunition. The 'new' guns I bought were all face-to-face sales with private people just because I did not trust our government. Our

government could easily trace that I gave these individuals money but even our government did not know why I gave these people that money and some of these guns I had bought early during the transition period while I could still use cash.

And it wasn't just guns we bought and instead it was everything we had ever thought about buying because they would be useful but just could not justify the cost for those items. And then we were done buying finally. Besides the loss of savings due to the negative interest rates, since the cash-less change, the inflation rate has gone way up. So that gave another big incentive for spending your money as fast as you could. Again, I think that was our government's plan the whole time.

Then things happened and they were very bad things. Congress passed a law barring the use of the new electronic wallets from being used to buy guns or ammunition, effectively barring all sales of guns or ammunition in the United States. While the bill did pass with bi-partisan support it was a close thing and had nowhere near the votes to prevent a veto. As soon as the bill hit the President's desk he vetoed the bill stating it was not only unconstitutional but was totally un-American. This was no surprise to anyone.

Then three weeks later both the President and the Vice President were killed while both were attending a ceremony. The Speaker-of-the-House was sworn in as the new President of the United States.

Immediately there were calls for a complete investigation into their deaths and for an emergency election. At first, there was no response to the calls for an emergency election then finally the White House issued a statement. Basically, while the two deaths were indeed a tragedy, it was not any kind of an emergency because our Constitution clearly stated what was to be done in this case

even though it had never happened before in our nation's history. Case closed.

It was barely two weeks later that a new bill was introduced in Congress that was really just a re-wording of the previous gun control bill that had barely passed and had been vetoed by our elected President. This time the bill enjoyed much more support (many thought because any 'no' voters might get blown up like happened to our President) and the bill easily passed both Houses and was quickly signed into law by our newly appointed President. The new law took effect immediately.

Overnight because of this new law over a hundred and fifty thousand workers who had jobs relating to guns or ammunition lost their jobs. Besides all those that suffered the immediate loss of jobs came all the others from the cascading effect of both all those job losses and the loss of all the shipping and loss of the need for all the raw materials used. Over the next couple of weeks, thousands of more people lost their jobs even though these people worked for companies that had very little to do with guns or ammunition.

The loss of all the jobs along with the closing of all those companies and small businesses led to a huge loss of revenue to many cities, counties, and even states. When the gun companies and the businesses that sold guns and ammunition came together in a huge lawsuit against the United States for the direct loss due to the new law a Federal judge dismissed the case. The dismissal was immediately appealed to the Supreme Court but they refused to take the case. This effectively ended any kind of legal action relating to the new law.

With no compensation forthcoming, the companies and businesses involved in the lawsuit announced that they would be giving away all remaining guns and ammunition now on hand because they now had no value. Several of

the gun manufacturers added all gun parts on hand to the give-away too.

Not trusting that our government might try to stop the give-away it was done immediately. Guns stores, gun shops, gun and ammunition factories, and other similar places were mobbed with people seeking the free stuff that just days before were very valuable. Once many people got the free guns and ammunition they later returned to the same places with food and other supplies that they dropped off and only asked that it be distributed to those hurt by the new law. In some cases, the amount of food supplies dropped off was almost worth as much as the items handed out for free.

Overnight there were many millions more gun owners in America and most now had a large supply of ammunition for those guns. It looked like the action taken by Congress had the exact opposite result as the lawmakers wanted. The give-away amounted to tens of millions of additional guns in the hands of Americans along with countless tons of ammunition. Additionally, there was the fact that our nation's GDP took a major hit and that the jobless rate had a huge rise like had never been seen before in such a short time span. Plus there was now a very larger portion of the American population that was both well-armed and very unhappy with our elected officials. Many people thought and actually expected that a large amount of this ammunition was about to be used inside the United States and that the expelled ammunition would result in a very large number of vacant elected positions in our government.

Chapter 4

The nation was very tense but so far there had been no real clashes. Of course, that could not hold especially when Congress started debating another bill. This bill would totally outlaw all fully automatic and semi-automatic firearms in America. There would be no buy-backs and no compensation would be given for these soon to be illegal weapons. These guns would have to be immediately turned in to the police and after the short turn-in time period there would be gradual search and seizures along with felony arrests for anyone possessing these arms.

I was pretty sure the floor debate for this proposed law would not last long. We called our children and asked them to come to our house and plan for an extended stay. They both knew why and both said they would wait and if the bill passed and things got very violent they would leave for our house. Both said they would start packing just a few things already.

We all understood. They had good jobs and could not just leave those jobs for no reason but they also knew their jobs would do no good if they were dead. We all expected immediate violence with the passage of this new law. If that did come to pass then each would call into work and say that they had to have a leave of absence due to a very sick parent that they had to take care of before they passed. My wife and I thought they made a reasonable choice, keep working but be ready to leave. Until the bill passed and was signed into law the likelihood of violence was small but as soon as it was the law then violence would almost certainly erupt.

It was two weeks later on the day before Congress went into a recess when the Senate passed the bill and sent it on to the President's desk.

We live a very long way from Washington DC but with Congress in recess, there would likely be Senators and Representatives here in this state, close enough for our kids or myself to do something if it was a decision any of us made. I did go online and check the voting records of all the Congressmen that lived very close to us and unfortunately, they had all been "yes" votes on this bill. I did some more research on the internet while waiting to see what all developed.

While things were great at our homestead, that was not the case across the nation. Several members of Congress had been shot and killed, three more had died when their homes had burned down, and an additional two had died in hit-and-run accidents. It was announced that all members of Congress now had round-the-clock armed protection. Two days after that announcement another Senator was shot and killed along with his two armed protectors.

Scenes on the television showed that armed military troops were now patrolling and protecting the White House. Then a concerted and well-thought-out attack was made on the electric grid supplying power to the Washington DC area which resulted in a massive blackout for a large area. It took just over three days to repair that damage even using all the electric linemen that had been called in from all surrounding areas.

Calls, faxes, and emails swamped our nation's capital with demands for a special election of both all members of Congress and the White House. Many thousands of protesters blocked countless streets in our capital city every day with all of them demanding special elections.

Our appointed President issued an emergency declaration and brought military troops into the city to remove the protesters. Once the protesters were removed all the troops stayed in place in and around the city. After a bomb was exploded in a Federal building inside that city additional troops were assigned and checkpoints we put in place on all roads entering the city. The checkpoints led to an almost complete blockage of all these roads. Many businesses inside the city closed down temporarily due to the lack of business. Grocery stores in the city were especially hard hit because deliveries almost stopped causing severe shortages. It was the same for all places serving alcohol that needed constant resupply to stay in business.

After three weeks many of the city citizens left the city looking for employment and lodging elsewhere. The city mayor and all city council members were inundated with calls and emails and were also stopped everywhere by residents whenever they left their homes. The demands were all the same – get the military out of the city.

When nothing happened after another week, Federal buildings all across the nation suffered damages. Fires in the buildings were very common with some buildings being damaged by explosions along with many being shot up. In all cases, this was only done when the building was empty so no lives were lost. Once the first few of these acts of violence were reported on the television, the number of attacks increased dramatically.

Countless Federal workers refused to go to work because they were afraid for their lives. This lack of workers caused many Federal services to be shut down besides the ones being shut down due to the severely damaged buildings. When these attacks failed to get the desired results the attacks increased threefold. Post Offices were left alone so regular citizens suffered much less loss of service from the attacks. All other Federal

buildings and equipment were fair game. In many cases, local police carefully adjusted their normal patrols so they never passed by any Federal buildings.

Many, many Federal workers called in sick, took vacation time, took early retirement, or otherwise stopped working. Most of these knew they were in no danger but instead were just doing what they could to stop our un-American government.

Congress was now back in session though handicapped by many empty seats. Many of the seats were empty due to the death of the person while many other seats were empty because the person had resigned effective immediately. Most of these had announced going on vacation to undisclosed locations, likely trying to save their homes from destruction.

Congress went into a secret session for most of one day. The next day a bill was introduced to repeal the last two regarding gun control. The bill quickly passed the House and then the Senate and was sent to the appointed President who immediately vetoed the bill which then ended up back in the House.

Both the House and the Senate overrode the veto and just like that the two anti-gun laws were null and void. A very large segment of the American population cheered. Unfortunately, there were still many problems and those problems would likely get much worse. I think that is one reason those anti-gun laws had been passed in the first place.

Our nation, like most of the world, was still in a deep recession. Tremendous damage to our economy had already been done by that first gun control law. All those people were still out of work and all those companies and businesses were still all closed and likely would remain closed for quite some time yet. No doubt about it, America was in deep economic/financial trouble. All the efforts of

the Federal Reserve had done nothing to help. There was no other government entity that could help at this point.

But there was Congress. Congress had the authority to do many things and they were currently debating one. Congress had Constitutional control of elections and they were now deciding if that control included calling for a special election to elect a President. Our Constitution was not quite clear on this issue. It had never been done in our nation's history because Presidential elections had always been four years apart with no exceptions. But the Constitution hinted that if both the President and Vice President were removed from office at the same time the authorized officer would hold that position only "until a President shall be elected." Many said that might mean a Presidential election should be held as soon as possible. This view seemed to have merit. But such a special election had never been done or even debated before this time since our nation was born.

A resolution for a special election was passed in the House and then sent on to the Senate. The Senate accepted and approved the resolution. The special election was to be held the first Tuesday in the month that was two months from the date of the accepted resolution.

There was no bill sent to the appointed President to veto because this was done by an approved resolution by both Houses of Congress. The Attorney General immediately appealed the resolution as unconstitutional to the US Supreme Court who accepted the appeal and would make a priority decision. Ten days later the people of the United States heard that decision. The Court ruled in favor of Congress when they stated that their view that the Constitution gave complete control of elections to Congress.

This election would elect both a President and Vice President and also fill all vacant seats in Congress. Congress quickly passed a small spending bill to provide

funding for all states to hold this special election. The bill passed both Houses with a veto-proof vote. The appointed President did not sign but allowed the bill to become law. The allotted money was sent to each state which had to use the funds for this election only.

Candidates had thirty days to submit their names to the states and a total of two months to make their case to the voters. It was an active two months.

Chapter 5

The nation's economy continued to shrink for those two months just like it had been and the unemployment rate continued to rise. Unemployment at this time was officially at seventeen percent but many thought that number was way lower than the actual number. After the special election had been given the approval of the court, a large number of additional Congressmen had resigned so the nation's voters would be voting in a large portion of Congress. This election was special in many ways but it would happen and there were many people vying for each opening.

At that was great and most agreed the special election was a good idea and sorely needed. But that was in the future and in the here and now Americans were hurting due to the severe financial hardships that almost all of them faced. Vehicle repossessions reached and far surpassed the previous all-time highs. Home repossessions were way up but did not quite reach the all-times high because things had been bad for so long that many people were already just renting homes instead of buying them.

Those that did own their homes were having a tough time just paying the property taxes. Inflation had been so high and only now was it leveling and maybe dropping a little. Inflation was stopped only because people had no money to buy. Everyone was cutting back on almost everything and this led to decisions that were almost impossible to make. Things like either buy food or buy medications?

Private health insurance was one of the first cuts by many people. It wasn't even a choice because if you lost

your job or even if just one in the household lost their job, there was just not enough money available to pay those huge health insurance premiums. Everyone knew that if they were really sick the hospitals would still have to heal them even if you had no money or insurance.

Now those people with the expensive cell phone plans were in trouble because most all of them were locked into those two-year contracts. But as they say, you cannot get blood out of a turnip and people just quit paying for their cell phones. They lost all phone services but could still use their phones for monetary transactions. It was the same with the large cable and satellite television services. People just stopped making payments. Cell phone companies and television service suppliers were hit hard and many filed for bankruptcy.

Vehicle repossessions caused some people to have no way to travel other than catch a ride with friends or family that lived close. Fuel was still high at over seven dollars per gallon of gas for the national average. Diesel fuel was about the same and that was one of the reasons that all products had gone up so much in price was the delivery costs. Food was high because fuel was used in many steps of the production.

But people were still hanging on even with all the problems. Crime was way up and at the same time many jurisdictions had cut back on the number of police and deputies as a cost-cutting measure. You see it wasn't just the general public that was hurting for money but all levels of government also like cities, schools, counties, and states. All of them were being forced to make drastic budget cuts at a time when many services were in high demand.

Schools were hard hit because fuel was so high, about twice the budgeted amount. Along with that was the much higher cost for the school lunches, again about twice the budgeted amount. Most schools cut all extra-curricular

activities. There were no more school sports except in the regular physical education classes.

One of our kids came back to live with us. Both he and his wife lost their jobs because their employers shut down. Our other daughter-in-law lost her job but our other son was still working so they stayed at their place for now but they expected to be moving out soon because his job was on shaky ground like most companies.

And then it was election time. The election went off without a hitch for the most part. Tabulating the voting results took much more time because of the many write-in votes. But we finally got the final results and the newly elected officials were all sworn into office.

Many of the new Congress members had plans for getting our economy going again, some of those plans were pretty bizarre. But something had to be done and bills were sent to different Congressional committees and those that were deemed to have some merit were brought to the floor for debates and changes.

One of the first things was trying to undo the stupid cash-less society plan we had now. The debates on that were lengthy with some wanting to keep the electronic wallets because by now everyone was used to using them and they had few real problems. It was decided that there was no reason we couldn't keep the wallets and still use cash too with no problems expected.

With that decision made the next decision was one whether to change our money because with none in circulation now would be the time. Many wanted a complete change to a new gold-backed currency. The whole thing was tabled until additional research could be done so, for now, we would just keep the cash-less system in place.

Congress did vote to temporarily extend unemployment compensation. They also temporarily raised the monthly amount those on the food stamp

program would receive. They did announce that major changes would soon be done to the national food stamp program but it was still being worked out. They said all entitlement programs would be going through big changes as waste and fraud were addressed.

Things were pretty good at our house. We had a lot of home-canned goods from our garden and this year our orchard had produced enough so we had many fruit jars full of home dehydrated fruit with a little more in the freezer.

Luckily the boys still lived in this state even though they lived quite some distance from our homestead so we could all get resident hunting licenses. With no one having a job we spent a fair amount of time in the fall hunting. Before hunting seasons we had practiced by killing all the coyotes we could in the general area. One had an electronic predator call that proved effective in calling them in close enough for a shot.

Each of us guys shot a deer (not at the same time) and while much of that meat was cut, wrapped, and frozen, we did try our hand at making jerking too. When the second jerky batch was deemed tasty by all in the household, the boys' wives each got a license and they too each shot a deer which were mostly turned into jerky. We had a lot of venison now on hand along with many frozen pheasants, quail, ducks, and rabbits to add some variety. Between us, we were also able to bag two wild turkeys that were used for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

Our large solar power system had been in for over a year and was working perfectly and we never missed grid power and certainly never missed getting those monthly electric bills. The neighbors reported that electric power had gone up in price twice since we had the solar installed and now they were thinking of getting solar also.

We had many vehicles here now and as the premiums had come due the auto insurance had been dropped on all of them except for our pickup. One rig was

all we needed among us anyway. The kids had also dropped all their health insurance. Like everyone, we were all cutting back as much as possible. None of us had working cell phones anymore though we did keep the house landline phone. I had dropped the internet service here too and the only television we had since moving here was the free over-the-air service. The kids had changed their mailing address to our place and every bill anyone got was either quickly paid or the service dropped. Most were dropped.

Chapter 6

By spring many changes had been made both here at home and in our country. Our garden was dramatically enlarged and we now had a grandbaby on its way. Nationally there were almost too many changes to even remember.

Many federal departments were dropped or cut way back. We were no longer members of the United Nations or NATO. We had stopped all foreign aid and had closed all but three of our over eight hundred foreign military bases. Returning troops had the option to leave the service or stay in but would be working on mostly non-military projects.

Our borders were now very secure and thanks to some of our Navy ships, all our coastlines were also very secure. At least, for now, all wall building on our borders was stopped and our troops kept the border secure. Some troops were temporarily assigned to other federal departments. Some were assisting ICE in rounding up illegals and deporting them. When found illegals were immediately arrested and placed in custody just long enough until a batch was large enough to fill transports and be deported. All possessions of the illegal were seized and kept. No effort was made to locate and transport family members together. This action caused a very large number of illegals to self-deport. With our borders now very secure all illegals in any prison were deported and turned over to the authorities in their native country.

Everyone receiving entitlements had to re-apply. At that time any found to be in our country illegally were immediately deported. Those who were citizens and able-bodied were assigned federal jobs where they would receive both pay and housing. These people could refuse

the jobs but then would receive no benefits. They could work at these jobs until they found employment in the private sector.

All people receiving disability payments were re-evaluated. Whenever possible jobs were found for them. All people receiving free section eight housing were re-evaluated and most were offered jobs and if refused they lost their free housing. Many of the federal jobs were simple things like babysitting kids (in monitored locations) for those out working. Some of the federal jobs were in conjunction with private enterprises deemed vital to the nation. These included all food-related jobs, farming, picking, trucking, packaging, and other jobs involved in our nation's food supply chain.

Congress made low-cost loans (many thought just grants) to businesses to start manufacturing here inside our own nation again. Our government guaranteed workers by using those getting entitlements. Most prisoners other than those in for violent crimes were put to work doing countless jobs for all levels of government. Even violent criminals were given work to do inside the prison walls whenever possible.

Many jobs once done by federal departments were cut way back and then given to the states. Initially, federal money paid for these but eventually, it would be totally state-funded. Some federal departments were just dissolved like the Education department. What Congress was doing was cutting graft, fraud, and redundancy. The goal was to make the federal government a small fraction of what it had become. Everyone knew that keeping programs to the smallest level of government was almost always better for everyone. The farther up the ladder, the more hands grabbed some of the allotted money.

Gradually at our household jobs were found, first at least somewhat locally then in the farther away but in the bigger cities. Eventually, it again was just my wife and me

left on the homestead. As the kids left extra food was sent with them with the knowledge that more food and lodging were always available here at the homestead.

I'm not sure if the recession is over but it is a fact that things in our country are getting better for everyone. Congress continues to work and even seems to be working for the American people instead of just working for themselves and their cronies.

Congress has now decided to create a new gold-backed currency. The Federal Reserve Bank has been disbanded. So we will be using completely different paper money that has gold-colored backs to show that the money is actually backed by gold now. Our coins with the exception of pennies and nickels will be made of silver just like in our past. They are talking about adding a twenty dollar gold piece. The new money will be worth much more than our 'old' dollars. I think they decided on twenty-five to one, old dollars to new dollars. So it is fine that I did turn in all the cash I had at home because it would have never been worth anything ever again.

As for the two of us left here on the little homestead, we are happy and busy.

The End

