

Report From Alaska -- Impact of Panic Buying



By Anna Von Reitz

Young people and old people are hardest hit, as you would imagine, Natives harder hit than Whites, but also better adapted to cope --- deep family ties, ancestral hunting grounds, survival practices still known.

Lots and lots of stores closed, so access to things we normally buy at smaller shops is gone. Skyrocketing prices. The stockers are changing the pricing each time they restock. Staples are gone --- some rebound of local supplies of milk and eggs. Pays to know farmers. Mail service is slow and uncertain. Gas stations are laboring. Produce supplies are spotty. Have plenty of pineapples, for example, but no potatoes in sight. Now that the food supplies are decimated, attention is refocusing on "other necessary things" ---- runs on plastic bags and dish soap, laundry detergent, etc. There were three bottles of off-brand dish soap on the shelf at Fred Meyer's yesterday afternoon and no garbage bags at all.

I bought a giant plastic cat box and coir -- worse comes to worse, I'll replant cabbage stems and herbs and lettuce seed and we'll get our fresh greens from that and sprouts. We laid in a big supply of salad sprouts and greens seeds in the fall, just in case things got testy this winter.

So I finished my due diligence yesterday, just ahead of the curve, and will stay home now until something rousts me out. We got a mini-blizzard and the snow is piled up again over my head. Even a moose would have to "swim" for it. For those of us who prepared ahead this is nothing so scary or terrible so long as the fuel trucks keep running and the electricity stays on. Some of us are even prepared for those eventualities. I have an old-fashioned hand water pump in the front yard and lots of different alternative heat sources-- more than enough to get the research team through what is left of this winter.

For others, it's terrifying both because of the prices of everything and the scarcity of anything to buy. There's that moment when you are standing there with a pocketful of money, and there's simply nothing that you need that you can buy. Or you are standing there forced to make a choice between a \$7 loaf of bread or a \$10 gallon of milk. A can of pinto beans, if you can find one, was at \$1.80 "on sale" yesterday. That's an .81 increase --- in less than two weeks. I saw a can of tomato sauce for \$2.46.... Our cost of living here is higher than high at the best of times, but this is already like twice the normal cost and people who were struggling before are now officially underwater.

The situation for the animals is potentially a lot worse than for people. I prepared for our animals, too, so they will be okay, but with so many people scrambling to save themselves, the animals come second, if at all. That goes for farm animals as well as pets. One of my first moves was to haul in chicken feed and brewer's yeast and other supplies for the young chicks and turkeys being sharecropped for our Law Team, but I could tell that most people aren't thinking of those needs --- yet. The spring displays of seeds are still standing pretty much unmolested, but that won't last, either, if this mess drags on; there won't be a seed potato or packet of carrot seeds from here to Seattle.

I am trying to get some of the locals organized to set up a "safe transaction zone" where people who barter things online can meet in a policed parking lot and exchange goods without fear of being bushwhacked. Barter is what comes next. Might as well make it as safe as we can for people.

So here we are, at the end of one of the world's longest and most fragile supply lines. God has a good sense of humor. My family was wise and prepared, not only for itself, but for vulnerable elders and animals, too. That is some comfort for sure. Being an "ant" has its own rewards. I remember the sacrifices made to establish and maintain a food pantry and put in an extra well and figure out relationships with farmers and all the rest of it. I also remember how people used to smirk at me and cock their heads. They aren't smirking now.

Hopefully there are enough people in Alaska who prepared enough in advance to make a difference and keep the barter chain going. Over the counter drugs will be in short supply soon --- analgesics, bandaids, bandages, first aid creams --- all the stuff of a family medicine chest. Most people here aren't thinking of that yet, either, but they will. The local herb store closed shop "until April 1" --- which could easily turn into "May 1" and "June 1" and.... so I am glad that I already had my supply of essential oils and gelatin capsules and herb teas packed away for a rainy day.

As for me and we, we are snugged down tight, the sun is breaking through the clouds here and there, and I am going to clean house and bake bread this afternoon---- in between correspondence and work on all the various projects we have in hand.

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