

From the Editor

The calm before the storm is one of those phrases everybody knows, but few think about.

I was reminded of it this winter just past (at least I hope it's passed by the time you read this!) as most of the country experienced a tough winter.

In Buffalo, famously the butt of jokes about our winter weather, we experienced the worst weather in recent memory, although not statistically the worst—only in the Top Ten.

It was a rude reawakening for most of us as, day after day, it dawned to a few more inches of snow, a few degrees lower than the day before, etc. etc.

I can't remember the last time my car had to be jumped to start in the morning. I called the number provided by my insurance company and an hour or so later, with the aid of some kind of box-like gizmo, I was off and running.

I did have jumper cables in my car—still sitting in the shopping bag they came in 6 or 7 years and one car ago.

Both the insurance company-provided service and the jumper cables themselves are part of the "calm before the storm." They are preparation for the day (this year in late January) when they are needed. The number for the insurance company's roadside assistance—which I haven't needed to use since the policy—and the cables—was purchased were readily accessible.

When I travel, especially in the winter, people often look at me quizzically when they find out where I'm from. "You live where?" they say. "Isn't the weather horrible—all that snow!" they say.

"Well," I usually reply, if I'm

in sunny Las Vegas, as I was for SHOT Show, "I'd have no idea what to do in a flood or earthquake, but I'm ready for winter." If I'm in the Midwest, I change my answer to "I'd have no idea what to do in a tornado;" and if I'm down South, I mention my total (blissful) ignorance of hurricanes.

I don't need to prepare for any of these other weather calamities, because the likelihood of my experiencing them is practically nil.

I do know where the wind-up radio/flashlight is in my house, just as I know where the extra soup, pasta, water and chocolate is. I can wrestle the dog into his handsome, but hated, wool coat when the weather is too cold for even fur-coat-wearing dogs. I can arrive at work looking silly, but comfortable, in longjohns and corduroy pants, two pairs of socks and t-shirt, flannel button-down and sweater. It's there I'll find an extra sweatshirt and more socks (not to mention some additional chocolate.)

The calm before any storm comes if you are prepared for it. Not hysterical about it. There's no need for a year's supply of food, when, with some irritation, I'm capable of walking to a grocery store even in four feet of snow. There is a need for a couple days' worth of supplies, so, I can prudently wait for the plows to make one pass before venturing out for my arugala (and chocolate!).

The calm before the storm is having a plan, and sharing it, so that if the worst, or even the mildly irritating, happens, I'm all set to weather the storm.

"Keep Calm and Carry On," was a famous saying of World

War II Britain. It's lately been enshrined on t-shirts, mugs, tin signs and teapots. The periodic Anglomania that sweeps this former colony is responsible for the renewed popularity.

But it's important to remember that the phrase came into use when English cities were being bombed, when food was rationed, when communications with loved ones fighting the war were non-existent and when families were torn apart as children were sent to remote, safer locations.

I suspect, in our frenetic 21st century world, the "Keep Calm" is what appeals. It's oh-so British (one can hear Dame Maggie Smith snapping it at a footman), and it's certainly true that serenity is sadly lacking in modern-day life.

But it's the "Carry On" part that really endures. The calmness comes from the carrying on. We can't, unfortunately, hibernate until Spring, there is a lot of "carrying on" to be done from Thanksgiving to Easter.

Gunowners, as I'm sure you know, have both parts of the phrase down. They're calm, and carry on, because they are prepared.

A year or so ago, W&G's Publisher, Julianne Versnel Gottlieb, no doubt while answering emails, preparing dinner and catching up on "Downton Abbey" simultaneously, decided to tweak the phrase and try out a variant (available at saf.org).

Her amended phrase, which resonates in much the same way as the original did 70 years ago, is "Keep Calm and Carry."

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