

## If bird flu hits, befriend a pack rat; [All Editions]

Margery Eagan. *Boston Herald*. Boston, Mass.: Oct 16, 2005. pg. 010

### Abstract (Document Summary)

As everyone knows, there are two types of people in the world: those who've stockpiled continuously since the Hurricane of '38, the Asian flu, swine flu, the Blizzard of '78, Y2K, 9/11 and even for this weekend's relentless rain.

Type A Nancy Richards-Stower of Scituate "has like 4,000 rolls of toilet paper in the basement, organized on shelves." She does laundry every day because "50 towels aren't enough." She has extra water, dog food, cat food, shops "buy one get one free" so there's plenty of soap, shampoo, detergent, canned chili and ravioli for any disaster.

Type B Lebeaux, who runs a Shrewsbury nursery, has no first aid kit. Band-Aids and batteries are . . . somewhere. "I lose my car keys every day. I lost my cellphone." What she'd like most to know about bird flu is "when it'll be over so I know if I've made it."

### Full Text (581 words)

Copyright Boston Herald Library Oct 16, 2005

Our governor, a spick-and-span guy, has advised us to stock up on soups and canned goods before the possible pandemic - bird flu.

But as everyone knows, there are two types of people in the world: those who've stockpiled continuously since the Hurricane of '38, the Asian flu, swine flu, the Blizzard of '78, Y2K, 9/11 and even for this weekend's relentless rain.

Then there are those like Robin Lebeaux who'll worry "when people start dropping dead in front of me."

Which type are you?

Type A Nancy Richards-Stower of Scituate "has like 4,000 rolls of toilet paper in the basement, organized on shelves." She does laundry every day because "50 towels aren't enough." She has extra water, dog food, cat food, shops "buy one get one free" so there's plenty of soap, shampoo, detergent, canned chili and ravioli for any disaster.

Type B Lebeaux: "Right now I have milk and juice and yogurt . . . I guess I have to go shopping."

Type A Richards-Stower, a hot-shot employment lawyer, has "about a million" batteries, a first aid kit, flashlights, and Post-it notes all over the kitchen and dashboard.

Type B Lebeaux, who runs a Shrewsbury nursery, has no first aid kit. Band-Aids and batteries are . . . somewhere. "I lose my car keys every day. I lost my cellphone." What she'd like most to know about bird flu is "when it'll be over so I know if I've made it."

Here's the thing. Type A's may be embarrassed by their anal-retentive qualities. But Type B's secretly wish they were Nancy. I know I do. I've spent a lifetime trying to get there.

There's something so satisfying about an overstuffed pantry, no? An everything-you-could-ever-shove-in-there medicine cabinet. Six six-packs of Ivory soap, a dozen tubes of Crest. Enough gauze to wrap the Lenny Zakim Bridge.

Real Americans, not to mention good mothers, are self-reliant, prepared ex-Girl Scouts who need no matches to start a campfire.

Besides, if we're quarantined for a month, Type A tuna hoarders with basement bunkers will do what their ilk always does: lord it all over Type B's, like the New Orleanians we blamed because they failed to swim to Georgia.

"I had three years of supplies in my basement, but it flooded," says downtown lawyer Stephen Townsend.

Tragically, however, there are those already unraveling at the mere mention of an epidemic flu. Call it Armageddon overload.

Karl Zahn's wife was understandably alarmed when he came home this week insisting she buy germ-fighting Purell and pour it all over the kids. Then he began ranting about Mother Nature plotting against us and how, between tsunamis and hurricanes, earthquakes and flus, "I guess God hates us all," he said.

"I'm freaking out," a distraught Zahn of New Hampshire admits. He said he's paying so much for gas, he can't afford to stockpile. He suspects global warming and is particularly worried about mutating animals.

"You think pigeons are a problem. What if cows grow wings?" asks Zahn. "What if there's a high-speed mongoose? We like to say this and that won't happen until hell freezes over and pigs fly. What if pigs start to fly?"

I would like to conclude on an upbeat note: My investigative reporting at the Dorchester Shaw's reveals that if you stock up today on Kraft Cheese Nips, two for \$5, they will last until March 2006. Even better: Spaghetti-O's with Meatballs, yum, yum, also two for \$5 - good till February 2007.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

People: Zahn, Karl

Section: NEWS

ISSN/ISBN: 07385854

Text Word Count 581

Document URL: