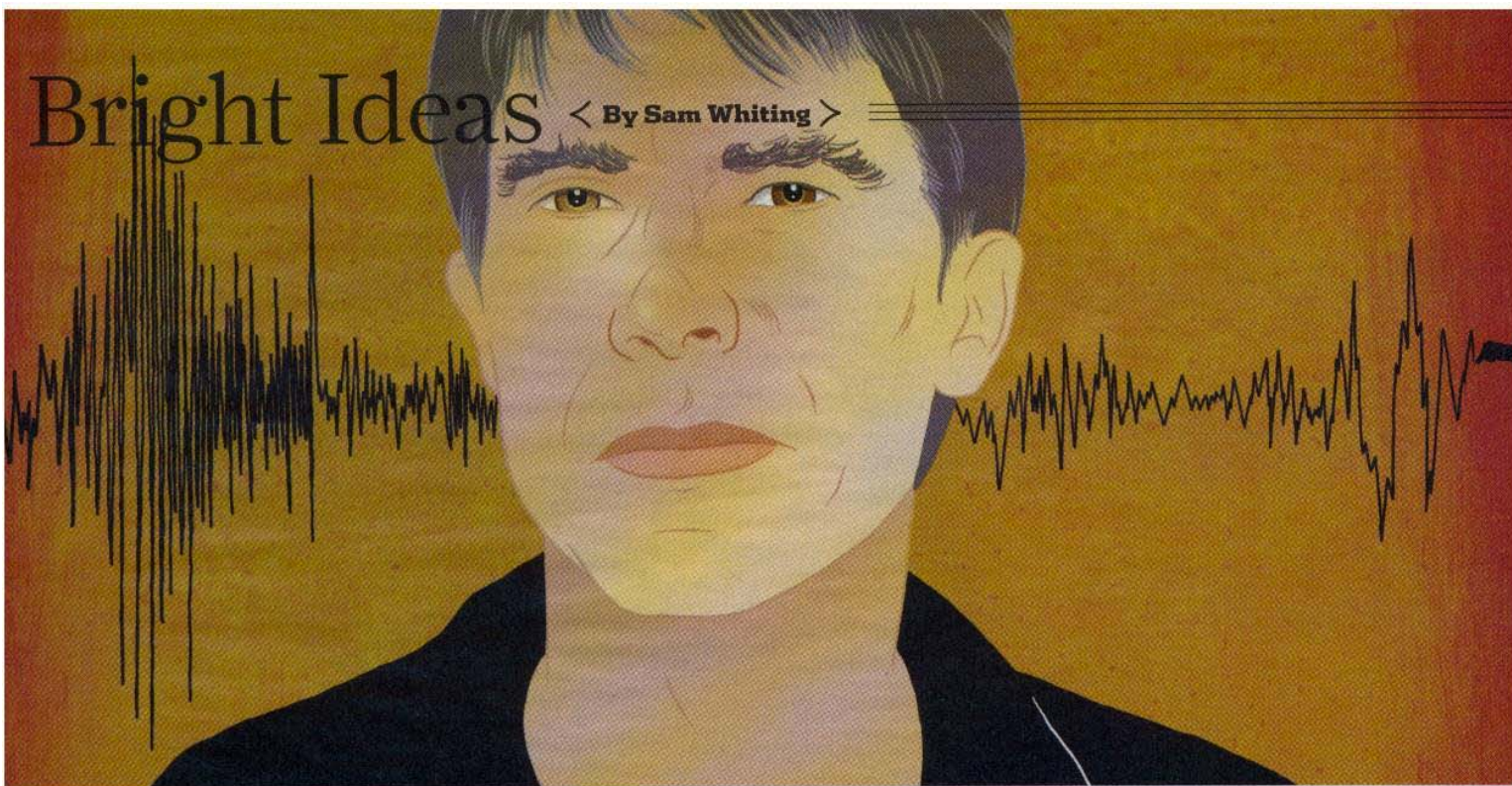


# Bright Ideas < By Sam Whiting >



## CHRIS McCLOY TAKES AN OUTDOOR APPROACH TO HEAVY-DUTY EARTHQUAKE PREPARATION

**T**he California homemade earthquake kit of a jug of water, a few candy bars, some Band-Aids and a flashlight with dead batteries won't cut it with Chris McCloy, 49. He is from New York and knows the fear. His QR (Quake Relief) Center is the size of a short coffin, and takes a cargo van to deliver.

**"THE WHOLE** earthquake-preparedness idea was new to me in moving out here. I think everyone that moves out here gets a little shaken by the idea. My wife, Janet Hobbach, is from Atherton. She was concerned we hadn't taken the steps necessary to keep our preparation up, and she was concerned for the kids. Robert is 4 and Genevieve is 7.

**I REALIZED** I needed to have something that would allow me to bring my family outside of the house. I knew that chances were any sort of civic response is going to take several days, so if I wanted to survive I needed to have the supplies. I wanted a kit that would have all of the supplies necessary for my

family to really survive well after an earthquake. I thought this should be a business. There should be someone that will bring you the supplies necessary to survive well for five days. There wasn't anyone.

**I WENT TO** the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) in San Francisco, which is a fantastic resource, and started writing a business plan. We take our orders over the phone and by Internet and we deliver to the customer's home.

**MY FIRST ORDER** was a woman in Larkspur, in late August. She found me on the Internet at [www.QRCenter.com](http://www.QRCenter.com). She was up on one of these twisty mountain roads and realized that in a major earthquake she would likely be on her own for a quite a bit of time.

**THE MOST POPULAR** order is a QR 4, for four people. Your QR is stored in a high-quality resin deck

box. You can sit on it out in the yard. Inside the deck box you will find first and foremost a gallon of water per person per day for a week. That's 28 gallons of water in individual gallon containers. You'll find a Coleman tent that will hold up to five people. You'll have a Coleman 40-

**THE LIGHTBULB: My wife came to me and asked me, for about the third time, to get our earthquake preparedness together. I had a kit that I was told should allow my family to survive for three days. I looked at it and I looked out in the backyard of our home in the inner Sunset. It was about 45 degrees with a heavy fog rolling through. I realized I could not take my family outside in this weather with this little kit.**

degree sleeping bag for each person. For nutrition you have Mayday emergency food bars. These are 2,000 calories per person per day for a week. That's less than half a bar per day. We're talking about survival here. You will find a fire extinguisher, a solar-powered radio with a flashlight, 17-piece hygiene kit for every two people. There is a Cole-

man 26-hour lantern. There is a 130-piece first aid kit. There is a folding portable toilet. There is a ground tarp for the tent to go on.

**THE TWO-PERSON QR** is \$499.99. It goes up \$75 for each person you add to the kit. We priced this aggressively. We buy each item

by the truckload and store it in our warehouse. If you go out and buy all these items retail it would be hard to do it for under \$1,000. The service call is \$69 for the QR 2 and it goes up \$10 for each one.

**AS A RESULT** of the Oct. 30 5.6 earthquake, our Web site received over 300 hits in the 45 minutes after the earthquake struck. I was driving home from the store when the earthquake happened. My daughter was

really shook. I had to sit with her. She was concerned that we had enough stuff in the earthquake kit. I told her it is the best that is available."

*We are looking for Bay Area people with innovative ideas who have put them to use. Please e-mail candidates to [brightideas@sfchronicle.com](mailto:brightideas@sfchronicle.com).*