**RECOLLECTIONS of SUPER STORM SANDY**

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We began building our house with our own four hands in October, 1969, and up until Hurricane Sandy had never had any damage, although we had weathered many storms, including the one in 1969 when we had just completed and got our first wall up. We were staying at The Blue Surf in Bethany and during the night the storm was so bad it tore the stones off of the roof, blowing them at our car and damaged our whole paint job. We were hesitant to see what had happened to our construction, so because there was no power at the beach, we went inland first, to get something to eat at what was a gas station with food, directly across what is now Hockers. We finally ventured to our new construction and were elated to see we had no damage!

Years ago Ben had made plywood panels for our jalousie windows in the porch and other places, but we never used them until Hurricane ? last year. That turned out to be not much. This time he was not going to put them up or pull our boat from the water, but when he saw the barometer dropping and the TV coverage, he changed his mind and we began with all the preparations. We had already moved our kayaks and grill in, gotten out candles, special foods, stored water, etc., but this time we went a lot further. Although there was mandatory evacuation, we were going to stay. If we left we would have had to get our oriental rugs and small furniture up to our second floor, get other pieces up on blocks, remove lower drawers, and as well as many other preparations. By staying we could determine if that was necessary.

Two separate female neighbors called to get our opinion about staying. We told them their houses may be safe but psychologically it would be quite traumatic to be alone with winds howling at a possible 90 miles per hour. They took our advice and left to stay elsewhere.

In the past storm,s the water had been over our dock many times but only once did it come to the edge of our bulkhead. Just in case, in the garage, we took out the rug in Ben’s shop/mancave, got his computer tower, tools, etc. up off the floor. We also got the lawn mower, power washer, etc. off the floor, and built a ramp to get his car another six inches off the floor. We took the other car to a relative’s, inland.

We kept watch that evening and saw the water had come over the bulkhead. At one point a decorative, frog in the garden began to get carried away. Joan went out in the dark to the rescue with water over her duck shoes.

About 1:00 am we opened the door from the house to the garage. It sounded so strange and we realized it was because of seven inches of water. It dawned on us that the refrigerator and bait freezer were running. The bait freezer on the right was just a little too far to get to easily, so Ben grabbed ahold of the overhead track for the garage door and, like a monkey, got onto the freezer. The cord would not come loose so he tore it loose. The cord for the refrigerator on the other side of the steps was too far away. Ben got on heavy rubber gloves and boots, and stepping into the water was able to unplug it.

The next day we found a very nice turquoise lawn chair had floated onto our ramp. We called and someone from town hall came and took it there. There was a huge amount of debris. At dinner time we discovered that our kitchen refrigerator wasn’t working. We hadn’t realized it during the day. We moved everything to the refrigerator in the garage. Later when we went to get something from there, we discovered that it also wasn’t working. We transferred everything to our big coolers and to neighbors.

For almost a month we did not have any lights in our master bath or bedroom, and after a repairman got our refrigerator running, it had to be connected by an extension cord to an outlet on the other end of the kitchen. It took many days for the water under the house to recede, and schedule electricians who checked junction boxes under the house. It was determined that an electrical wire under the house had a nick in it and the rising water blew that circuit. We also lost power to our dock lights when the water got into that junction box two feet above the top of the dock.

The crawlspace under our house, which is only 2 ft., had water that took days to recede, with the help of a portable sump pump and fans. Contractors that evaluated determined that we had to replace all of our duct work whose insulation had become soaked with salt water.

Ben researched what he needed and located the materials to install a permanent sump pump on his own. The salt water that came under the house caused corrosion of the vents in the cinder block. He found replacement vents either very expensive for stainless, or other kinds inadequate, so he is reconditioning the existing ones and replacing their screening. We have also added some gutters and adjusted grading.

For days we watched a very large undetermined article in our canal move some with the wind and tides. Unlike wood, it looked soft and puzzled everyone. Someone rumored that a couch had been lost and we considered that. We were concerned that if it sunk, it would be a boating hazard. We notified the town and called DNREC who sent someone out. They took pictures. Eventually we couldn’t stand it anymore, so Ben and one of our sons threw a grapple, hooked it and dragged a huge (20’x30’?) tarp ashore. Puzzle solved!

A large evergreen at the front corner of our house was uprooted and will need to be replaced. We had no flood insurance.