

Rocks of Luck Charley

Now hear this ! This is no drill, attention to the following my friends and you will read the day/night mare ride of GringoBob on August Friday 13th, 2004. To begin I always have maintained and still do that one never runs from a hurricane, as it will always follow you.

No, I didn't abandon ship ! But I was persuaded by the predicted 140-mile/knot winds of Charley, a Category 4 Hurricane, which was "supposedly", headed directly my way according to all the local radio and TV scuttlebutt. So on the morning of Friday 13th, I packed my sea bag and with my Dog Duke [German Shepherd] I shoved off for directions unknown.

By zigging and sagging through the state of Florida and heading dead ahead north on Hwy 19 to hard right rudder east on Hwy 44 then left rudder dead ahead north on Hwy 301, to evade the hurricane heading my direction and listening to the car radio giving me bum dope directions of the on coming hurricane, I then turned dead ahead south on Hwy 301 towards Orlando, only then to learn that the hurricane now had changed direction and was heading towards Orlando. I then got the hell out of Dodge [Orlando] mainly, because all the motels were filled or wouldn't accept pets.

Now my course of direction was dead ahead north on interstate 95 along the east coast, passing thru Daytona Beach, St. Augustine, Jacksonville with now the predicted hurricane path right on my fan tail and only hours away, I then turned hard rudder left west on interstate 10 and found an acceptable motel near Lake City that would accept me and Duke, this was after traveling roughly 200 miles and over 8 hours.

Throughout this ordeal, I wasn't under any stress, as I contribute this to Duke's presence who by the way behaved fantastically until he would wake me up every hour on the hour from 3 am and on to go outside. During this drill, I did not stop to eat as Duke would have to stay in the van and alone and that would worry me ever so much.

Driving home on Saturday morning the Main interstate 75 was crowded with convoys of emergency trucks heading south to the disaster areas.

Now at my age, I don't believe that I'm suited for this drill of evacuation but after arriving home and watching the various TV channels of showing the vast destruction created by hurricane Charley, I then fully realized how fortunate and lucky I was to evade this mass destructive hurricane and now being subjected to the after math of this hurricane which created numerous tornados, lighting and thunder storms throughout the afternoon.

Now, I fully realize what my Grand Daughter, Gina said years ago on a Christmas card, "Papa Bob you are in destructible," Well. Maybe it was just luck missing Charley ?

Furthermore, one must always remember that hurricanes are devilishly hard to predict so why push your luck ?

The moral of this drill make certain that you have a motel reservation in advance which accepts pets and you know which direction to safely follow come hell or high water. Last but not least, remember when in doubt drive around in circles shouting gangway and then head for the boon docks as it just might be safer thar ! never say never.

Well now, to continue this saga we now come to the “Hunker Down” part of Hurricane season. Just how does one hunker down with a Hurricane Francis bearing down upon you with tail winds up to 140 miles. This is Sunday 9-5-04 and loss of power creates a hardship of going without A/C, water, cold beer etc. and all the connivances that are related to normal living. Sweating out a hurricane and I really mean “SWEATING” when one doesn’t have A/C one really sweats particularly going without a shower for many moons. The power came back on after four days but it was necessary to remove all the spoiled food from the freezer and refrig. Yes, I finally got to take a shower after four days of “Hunkering Down”

Hundreds of thousands of homes were still without power due to flood conditions. My damage report consisted of broken broken branch’s and misc. debris of which I had the pleasure of picking up one at a time.

There is no need to go into further details as we experienced and had the un-fond pleasure of “Hunkering Down” for TWO more Hurricane’s, namely Ivan & Jeanne. So thus besides hunkering down & “sucking it up.” Yes, I managed to get in several games of Golf but with the course’s containing flood water it was a loss ball time. So with 12 hurricanes down, it’s look to for tomorrow to stand by for the next Big One ? Gosh it’s great living in Florida and we also have the Election to count “chards” or what ever.. Tally Ho, Ya’ll

Now for the Rest of the Story...Dec. 2004 I sold my house on Sandpiper Ave. and moved to Brentwood a independent retirement community in Lecanto, Fl. & Yes, I also have my German Shepherd, Duke & so in my remaining years, I enjoy Golf, Computers, Reading, Music & TV...Thus, old Sailors never die they just putt away & chase that little old white ball when ever I can find it. P/S There is a Golf Course at my front door [well what do you know ?] In March 2006 I lost Duke, My German Shepherd & looking around I came to the conclusion that people came here to die & so I decided to get out of Dodge { Florida}.

Thus, I moved from Hurricane Land to San Marcos,Texas 1, May 2006. Oh yes, I also joined the Quail Creek Golf Country Club & am enjoying golfing twice a week. P/S Once a Sailor now a Twilight Sailor