

Saturday, August 22, 1992

Marathon

Bobbie Catlin leaves for Calif. today. I'm going to make a point of calling him early.

It has been an early morning for me after a bad night.

First, of all, we went to bed too early (9:00 P.M.)
Secondly, it poured all night - we have no door on the port side of the boat. It is only covered with plastic sheeting. Of course the rain came from that side and I was up putting oddles of towels down to sop up the downpour. Most probably will eat his heart out.

When I returned to bed I had a recurrent (even though it kept waking me up) nightmare. At the third time it woke me, I got up for the day. I have been writing since 5:00 A.M. It is now 6:30 A.M.

Our plan is for Most to finish the door and hang it tomorrow. I'm sure the rain will not allow this.

I am supposed to finish the Bedspread. This is possible.

Most decided to hang the door today, unvarnished.
We have reservations to eat dinner at Mike's Hedaway, a favorite spot we have not visited since our return.

We are all a little edgy. Tropical storm Andrew, has become a hurricane and is headed for the coast of Florida. I'm afraid it will dip south and catch us. Most says this rarely happens.
(The dip south - I mean.)

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Andrew - Marathon to Orlando to Marathon

Saturday, August 22, 1992, Continued
to: Tuesday August 25, 1992

We arrived home from dinner about 9:30 P.M. to find that Linda & Jim Smith had returned. Their Avon, which we were minding while they were in Miami for her doctor appointment, was gone. We took the whaler for a spin out to their boat on anchor in Boat Key Harbor, to give them their keys and air pump. (One of the cells of their inflatable persists in going flat).

When we got their we found them putting the finishing touches to getting "Sweet Agony" storm ready. When they were finished they said they planned to get into their rental car and leave for the West Coast of Florida where her father lives.

I felt we should be doing the same, and Mort was resistant. He said if the storm moved a couple of tenths of a degree north, we would be well out of danger. We, however, put the weather channel on for the 7:50 P.M. tropical coverage, and Whams! The storm had dipped a tenth of a degree south. Mort said, "let's pack up and get out of here."

By 11:30 Mort had secured all loose items on the decks, I had packed, we had removed the Bimini canvas, and we had completed our evacuation list (prepared well in advance).

I felt as we left that we would never see our home again. Mort was more hopeful, but we were taking no chances.

At about 10:00 P.M. we had called Tat & Ruth to ask

if we could stay with them. They said sure to just come along.

By 11:35^{P.M.} we were on our way, and we weren't alone. There was a steady stream of cars moving toward Miami, and away from the Keys. Moving is the word, but speed was not. Most of the time, until we were off of U.S. 1, we could go no faster than 45 MPH. But we got out with no incident, thank goodness.

When we arrived at Nat & Ruth's, he buzzed us up. (He had left word with their condo security to allow us through.) They had made up their day bed and had towels and coffee out for the A.M. We were exhausted, but could not drop off to sleep. The tension was incredible.

Sunday
Aug 23 The next am. Nate tried to convince us to stay, while we tried to convince him to leave. They were not prepared for anything, and seemed unwilling to take any measures that we thought necessary like filling their tub with water (to use for flushing) or taping their windows and removing objects on their porch which could become projectiles in the wind.

We left as soon as we could gather ourselves, have some coffee and hear the latest bulletins. The word was that they had begun an actual evacuation of the Keys, and were talking of evacuating areas of Dade and Broward County. We couldn't get in the road soon enough. We felt we would aim for the St. Cloud, Kissimmee area.

The trip North and inland was filled with anxiety and strain, for our own safety, and for the safety

of the home we left in Marathon.

The traffic was heavy, but, flowing. Most people were driving carefully. There were, however, the inevitable stupid people trying to weave in and out creating unsafe conditions. There were some break-downs on the side of the road, lines at the gas pumps and rest stops. All of which made us glad that we had begun this trek before the real crunch.

We made a mistake however, in not calling ahead for room reservations. By the time we got to St. Cloud - about 3:00 in the afternoon - there were no rooms left in any inn or motel. We had the good sense, however, to call the 800-information & reservation number for Quality Inn from St. Cloud. We asked for the first room available north of St. Cloud. We got the last room in Orlando.

At this point we had not eaten all day, nor had made any potty stops. Most had the foresight to fill the car with gas on Saturday, just in case.

We were tired, scared and very unhappy. All reports on the radio in the car, and T.V. when we got to the room, pointed to the real possibility that the storm would strike Marathon hard enough to cause the loss of "Miss Shugah Too", Our home and our lifestyle.

We had secured her as well as we could but there was no way to protect her from a great wind and a tidal surge of 8 to 12 feet! We were sick!

About 15 minutes from the hotel we stopped at an I Hop. We weren't hungry, but we knew we had to eat. A club sandwich and a cup of coffee later we were on the road to the hotel once again. The lines at the front desk when we got there were long and slow-moving, but we were luckier than many. We had a room & a bed.

As soon as we got to our accommodations, we dropped our bags and started calling the family to let them know we were safe and where we were.

About an hour later there was a knock on the door. Marv & Flo had sent us a basket of fruit & cheese and a bottle of wine along with good wishes.

The weather predictions & projections for the course of Andrew were not good. It looked as though Marathon and Hollywood where Ruth & Nat are would not come out unscathed. Of course we didn't sleep. The hurricane was predicted to make land fall about 4:00 A.M. We each spent the night building mental pictures of the destruction of our home and the loss of our possessions. (When we left we only took the bare essentials.)

Monday
Aug. 24

The news channels early on Monday had only sketchy reports. We knew it hit Dade County and Parts of Monroe County, but the extent of damage was not yet known. There was no word at all about the Keys. All morning we stayed in our room, glued to the set looking for news. Finally we realized that we were doing ourselves no good just watching and agonizing, so we began to make some calls to the emergency hot-lines. No one knew anything about the Keys!