

## Hurricane Hassles & Frazzles

Charley the Gnarly, Frances the Freak, Ivan the Terrible, Jeanne the Mean?

by Summer Best

In Florida, we are weary of hurricanes. Exhausted. Tired. Moody, angry and frustrated.

Get power, lose power. Listen to people complain. Haul water to horses. Lose your shoes in the mud. Try to operate that \*&#@^%? %\$ generator that you probably paid too much for. Worry. Board up the windows... again. Keep your chin up. Volunteer. Buy more matches and flashlights. Barter for gasoline. Find mosquito repellent. Get so mad at your chainsaw that you throw it down (in the mud).  
Welcome to Florida!

Time to Laugh about Ithurricane comic

Truth is, Floridians are not only weary of hurricanes, we're worn out just talking about them. Everyone has a storm story. Some folks, hit by three of the four massive tempests, endured six weeks of non-stop hurricane cleanup, followed by preparing again, followed by more cleanup! We hope it's the worst stress – on many levels – that we'll experience for a long time.

If you're looking for facts and figures and hurricane horror stories, T.V. provides that. Today, we're giving you the fun stuff. Stuff we've learned about hurricane season, about preparing our places and horses for natural disasters, and stuff that just gets funny after a while.

How to Survive

Before the Storm...

Shopping Spree!

Here's the easy part. Go crazy buying flashlights, batteries, candles, kerosene lamps, portable radio, matches, deodorant (in large quantities), Spam (it's truly gourmet when you have no power). If you arrive at the supermarket when the storm is confirmed to hit your town, then you're probably too late. Buy what's left on the shelves.

Home Improvement Store

Bring the trailer. Buy plywood for boarding up windows, tarps, a new BBQ grill. Another chainsaw and a few extra chains, oh, and oil. Skip the already-empty generator aisle. Buy sandbags.

Fill Up

Before the storm hits, fill every container you own with water. This includes, but is not limited to, the bathtub, old milk jugs, all water troughs,

old buckets, wheel barrels, coffee cups, toilets, plastic storage tubs, feed bins, old plastic bottles, EVERYTHING. Authorities and newscasters (who live in town with neatly manicured lawns and covered parking) will tell you to stash away two to three gallons of water, per person, per day. You live in the boonies. You need more.

#### Hoard the Petrol

Fuel up your vehicles and fill every portable gas can you own. Don't wait. Ever seen gas rage? Brutal.

#### Raid the Feed Store

Critical errand to run. Imagine the critters being hungry! Grab mosquito repellent while you're there. And more tarps. And a carton of duct tape. And whatever is left in the store.

#### Rob the Bank welcome to Florida

What woman carries cash? You will, or you'll be sorry! Your favorite ATM might not have electricity after the storm.

#### Leave 'em In? Turn 'em Out?

The debate continues: Should you turn your horses out or leave them in the barn? The answer: Only you can decide. Either way, identify them with your name/phone number/physical address. A grease stick or aerosol paint will work. Painted I.D. lasts through rain. Broodmare tags are another option.

#### Hook Up

Hook your truck to the trailer and drive into the middle of the pasture, away from any trees. When the wind hits 100+ mph, it will dance a little bit.

#### If You Evacuate

Efficient hurricane preparedness persons should evacuate when the meteorologist is standing in front of the T.V. screen and pointing to a big blob off the coast of some eraser-shaped island 5,000 miles away. A storm might be coming. Of course, the storm might turn around and go the other way, or it might do a little loop-de-loop in the Atlantic, or maybe it will just churn and slap around in the ocean for a few days. But if you wait until it is definitely coming, how will you get out of town with your horse, three dogs, two cats, hamster, goldfish, two children and husband? You will sit in traffic until you have rage of many varieties. \*Note: Please heed the advice of your local authorities, regarding evacuation.

#### Surviving After the Storm...

##### First things First

Fix the fence with the trees smashed through it. Horses love the adventure

onto your neighbor's property.

#### Flip on the Radio

This will be fun at first. If any stations are operational in your area, you'll enjoy listening to excited deejays talk about the storm on your portable radio. They are your connection to the world and to information. Insurance companies will have radio advertisements ready for you, explaining that you should call your representative right away with property claims. But your phone won't work. Soon, when phones are back in service, ignorant people will begin calling their favorite radio stations to whine. They will complain that they have no power. They will complain that it's hot outside. They will complain that they are being forgotten in their part of the county. These are usually the same people who have, like, maybe one itsy, teeny, tiny limb down in their yards. Ignore these people.

#### Love Thy Neighbor

Love him even if he has a generator and you don't. Even if his generator keeps you awake at night. \*Note: Do not covet thy neighbor's chainsaw, tractor, mud boots or 4-wheeler. You may, however, secretly covet his generator.

#### Meet Thy Neighbor

Amazing. You've lived here for 8 years and never met Al and Suzie from the next road over. Here's a great excuse to utilize your new grill. Al and Suzie can bring steaks that are thawing in their freezer. You can tell stories and decide who has the most property damage, and the kids can swim in the street. And maybe Al will let you borrow his generator. (Keep dreaming.)

#### Bathe in Rain Runoff from Roof

It's a rather cold bath, but it's been referred to as an invigorating indulgence.

#### Honor the Curfew

Your area will have a curfew, and for good reason. This is a dangerous and thoughtless time to go cruising uptown, especially at night. Save the roads for emergency workers and your new best friends working at the power company.

#### Your Horse

If your horse isn't injured in the hurricane, he is probably fine. In fact, this is the most exciting things that has happened in years for him! There are fallen trees to jump over in the pasture, and foreign objects launched into the ground, and lots of mud puddles to play in! He doesn't notice that your air conditioner isn't running, or that you have major body odor and that

your hair is really a mess. He's curious why you are so grumpy? \*Note: If your road is blocked by trees or debris and you cannot drive out of your driveway, it turns out that your horse is a good mode of transportation.

#### Launch a New Company

Computer programmers and others in the technical field seem to have a difficult time getting new jobs when the power is out, but Joe's Tree Cutting Service appears to stay very busy. As do Chuck's Chainsawers, Bob's Water Delivery, Fran's Laundry (they pick up and deliver, for a small fee), and Hernandez Branch & Debris Removal. All of these companies opened up for business in the summer of 2004. They have become very wealthy. And they take cash only.

#### Know Anyone with a Pool?

Bathe in the pool. Wash your clothes in the pool (look forward to a stone-washed effect on your jeans), wash the dishes... When your power is restored, help your neighbor drain the pool!

#### Permission to Grill Anything

Boil water for coffee, heat water for bathing, grill your eggs, grill anything you can find. This is a fair time to experiment grilling all the remaining items in your refrigerator before they spoil.

#### FEMA

You previously heard of FEMA, but it had little meaning. Now, the guys with the blue roof tarps, ice, bottles of water and MREs are your best friends. (If you don't know what FEMA and MRE stand for, you will.) By the way, the FEMA folks are really nice people.

#### Godzilla Mosquitoes

Fresh-hatched mosquitoes adore the days after a hurricane. Mosquitoes also love it when your barn has no electricity and you cannot turn on electric foggers or spraying systems to kill them. Mosquitoes breed fast and furious after hurricanes, and they grow REALLY big. \*Please vaccinate for all mosquito-related equine illnesses well in advance.\*

#### Blow Kisses at Power Guys

These guys are your new best friends. Love them. Feed them. You need them desperately. Honor their orange plastic cones on the roads. Do not shoot them birds, and puh-leeze don't ask them when your power will be restored. (We have it on good authority that they restore power first to people who don't bug them with that question.)

#### When Power Comes On

Boy, is your house a mess. Living in the dark had it's advantages!

Seminole Feed, located in Ocala, Florida, donated more than 10 tons of feed towards hurricane recovery efforts, in addition volunteer work.

You Know You've Been Hit Hard When:

Your neighbor's pool cage is on top of your barn.

The FEMA official says he just got back from a war zone, and your town looks worse.

You've had neighbors for 10 years, and didn't meet them until this summer.

Your 4-wheeler is more valuable than your car.

You throw a party when two weeks go by without having to evacuate again or prepare for another hurricane.

Your horses haven't been ridden in a month, er, or more.

You know what a traffic light looks like, up close and personal, and in the middle of the street.

You have driven your truck over power lines and this seemed normal.

Your entire tack room is covered in mold, and this seems like no big deal.