

SURVING SUPERSTORM SANDY

OCTOBER 29, 2012 - NOVEMBER 4, 2012

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Surviving Superstorm Sandy

October 29– November 4, 2012

We are so very fortunate that we didn't have any damage to our condo when Hoboken was hit so hard by Superstorm, Sandy on October 29, 2012.

Sandy was a major storm with wide spread flooding that left dozens dead, thousands homeless and millions without power. The area damage was in the billions.

This is our story. We were without power for almost 6 days from Monday night, October 29th until noon the following Sunday, November 4th.

We learned what was going on from talking with many friends, via email, texts and Facebook!

We did our best to respond back but not sure we did in every case as we didn't have internet service and were communicating via cell phone and blackberry. Keeping them charged was a full time adventure in itself.

We kept our cell phones charged through the generosity of our across the street neighbors, who were on a different power grid and had no interruption of power or power service.

We didn't realize, for quite some time, that Hoboken was so often mentioned on the local, state and national news!

The storm reminded us how fortunate we are to have so many friends and such wonderful and supportive families.

Those friends and family checked in with us to be certain that we were doing well and surviving.

For six plus days we were without electric power or heat. In spite of that both my wife and I toughed it out.

We did not evacuate to a shelter. We did not leave town. We maintained and coped with the kindness of strangers and the help of friends here in Hoboken.

We have a gas stove, and our gas worked. We also had water, but no hot water. So we could do limited cooking by flashlight or candle light.

Our breakfast routine was oatmeal with French Press coffee (a neighbor across the street loaned us their French Press coffee maker).

Dinner was soup and pasta until after several days we found some restaurants with power.

Some of the good that came from the storm was meeting or getting to know our neighbors so much better.

The working power grids were spotty since our across the street and back yard neighbors both had power the entire time.

Across the street they set up a power cord and power stick and even served coffee every morning for anyone who needed it.

Because we were friends we were able to plug in our phones and ipads inside their home. We even ate dinner with them one night (not sure we were invited) which was fun. We supplied the wine and later delivered 24 cupcakes from Crumbs Bakery on [409] Washington Street, as these generous neighbors always had a house full.

On Wednesday Halloween, Dennis helped pass out donated free food in front of Amanda's restaurant on Washington Street.

Jan also passed out food for several hours, as well. Our friends and owners of Amanda's and the Elysian Café were able to cook with gas and give away food that was about the spoil because there wasn't any power to run the refrigerators or freezers.

Reactions of people was great and most were surprised it was free, but they were very appreciative. The food handed out was top-drawer and tasty and included, lobster bisque, empanadas and lots of french fries.

Jenna Bush [Hager], who works for NBC News interviewed, Joyce Flinn, the co-owner of Amanda's and Elysian Café, about the food hand-outs.

Then Jan met Jenna and mentioned to her that we lived in Austin, Texas for years. Jan said she only saw her dad only once at the Capitol 10,000 fun run. Jan also related that the former president, George Bush has "nice legs"! Jenna smiled and laughed.

There is no doubt Jenna has heard a lot of things said about her father but probably not that!

One day we showered at friends in town, who also had power the entire time. Then on Thursday night our back yard neighbor, who owns the apartment building behind us, ran an extension cord into our condo.

We then had one lamp, which we could take from room to room and we could charge our phones and ipads in our own condo.

Jan could see to put in her contacts and do her make-up. Dennis could see to shave with cold water and comb what hair he has left.

It was awesome! Semi-Civilized living, at last.

Jan's office in lower Manhattan was closed all week because lower Manhattan also was without power.

There were daily discussions between employees repeating the same crisis information to each other concerning their place of employment.

After almost a week off they were prepared to return and then did go back to work on Saturday when power was restored at her office, as well as most of lower Manhattan.

Days passed slowly and the night streets were eerie and strangely dark without street lights or stop lights or store lights.

The Elysian Café was open in the evenings lit with more than 200 candles. They served wine, beer, news and gossip.

So to the northern part of Hoboken the neighborhood was a fun, dry, warm safe harbor.

My wife and I did tour town by foot and bikes and saw the devastation. The PATH train (subway between Hoboken and Manhattan) area was under water. It took weeks to get the PATH up and running, again. So many people on the waterfront and in the west of town had serious storm, flood and wind damage.

We drove to Target to buy many items, especially children's warm clothes, which we then donated to the less fortunate here in town.

Amazingly with our condo being on "higher ground" didn't have any water or storm problems. Even our garage didn't flood as the sump pumps worked well and often before the power failed.

Jan's yoga studio, our grocery store, movie theater, and favorite breakfast restaurant were all closed due to the tide surge and flood damage. We trust they had insurance and will be back in operation soon. We did get to see and hear Governor Chris Christie's news conference that was held in town on Sunday before Election Day.

He was informative and humorous. We liked how he handled reporter's silly questions. Also in attendance was Hoboken's Mayor, Dawn Zimmer and Department of Homeland Security, Secretary, Janet Napolitano.

Within 2 days after the power did finally return, there was a great Nor'easter which dumped well over 4" of snow in our area.

Our Power remained on. Right after the power returned and the Nor'easter, the weather really turned cold. Temperatures in the 30's.

It made us wonder what the winter would be like? We were so fortunate we had so little in the way of being inconvenienced

and no damage to our health, hearth or home.

Overall, in the scheme of our life, Super Storm Sandy was a speed-bump. We survived in fine order and feel deeply for the folks whose lives were up-ended and were not as fortunate as we were in surviving.

This may be more than you wanted to know! Thank you all for all your good thoughts and prayers. We just hope that those without power still and those who lost so much are able to get back on their feet and on with their lives as quickly as possible.

We still very much enjoy living in Hoboken and do hope that this area will continue to rebuild and to recover, better and stronger than ever.

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