

6 Oct 24-Look back on the month

During Hurricane Katrina, I worked in J33 Current Operations at the newly formed USNORTHERN Command and it was the US's first use of that command to coordinate military support to civilian authorities under the narrowly carved law that avoids a martial law situation.

We had LOTS of information, it was a challenge to filter what was accurate and what was guesses. Congress was yelling at us that death counts were up and down day to day as if DoD counts the dead instead of the locals.

During my personal situation, we were without cell phone service, without texting ability, without internet. IF you could get phone, in boxes were full for service providers. There was a news black out. With no way to receive information, we had no idea what was going on around us. So empty promises of help from the government never reached us, all we knew is we were doomed if it started to rain.

Like every morning, I woke up at 3:40 am the day the storm hit, 27 Sept 24. I was at home because work knew it did not want people on the road with the real risk of downed trees and downed power lines and kept most people away from our building.

Like most mornings I am at home, I was working on stock market stuff. 5:21 am I downloaded my trades from the week, I think soon after we lost power. Sometime thereafter, Scott and Katherine got up. At some point we went into the dining room and were looking outside the window in wonderment of how high the creek was in our yard.

Then we heard a huge "SNAP" and a "BOOM" and the entire house shook, and then shook again, booming and shaking for probably 10 seconds. It was pitch black so we had no idea what was going on, where it was safe to run to. Then the rain started pouring in the house. I ran to the garage and got the car washing buckets and we started placing them all over the dining room and living room to catch the water. Back to the garage to grab moving tubs that were empty. Then pouring water from the large tubs to the buckets because the tubs would quickly become too heavy to dump water from.

Then the rain stopped, and like 1970s post Apocalypse movie, the world was dark and silent and we knew life was not like it was a minute ago. We knew we needed to call our insurance, USAA. But even immediately after the loss of power, cell phone coverage was horrible. We tried for over an hour to get a signal to try and call and could not get anyone. So at 4am his time we called my dad who we knew was also a USAA customer, maybe he could get through. Finally after being on hold 45 minutes USAA had an agent on the line and we hung up with dad and filed the initial claim. That was pretty much the last time we heard from USAA until Friday, 4 Oct 24.

The non licensed USAA phone agent said USAA does not do anything but send out an adjustor. WE had to find someone to remove the trees from the house. WE had to find someone to tarp

the roof. I had to explain WE do not have internet, WE do not have reliable cell service, how are we supposed to do that? How are we supposed to know if they are USAA approved?

By now all cell and text ability was non existent on my phone and nearly so on Scott's. So we reached out again to my brother. We asked David to please call any tree service or tarp service he could find and put us on the list of needing services, which he did.

Our neighbor at the beach texted me and surprisingly the text came through. They assured us our home was fine in North Myrtle Beach. Immediately we knew Scott needed to go to the beach where he could have internet, cell and text ability and call people to get us some kind of help to save our house from more damage from any rain or follow on tree damage.

This is the blue chair I sit in usually, but I do not sit there until Scott wakes up as it is adjacent to our bedroom so any light would wake him. But I was not sitting in it, we were looking outside

in another room. The debris on it is the ceiling, the interior wall and some trusses.



Here is the tree on the side of the house, crushing in the side and puncturing the roof. Note how it is “just” the top of the tree and the branches. The wide and heavy part of the tree fell to the side of the house. The entire back wall probably would have fallen in on us had the wide part fallen on the house, and the house would have been cut in half due to the height of the tree.



I'll post info tomorrow about the timeline-22 Oct we find out if the house is uninhabitable and we can no longer camp in it. Framing the back, rebricking and then putting up trusses and a roof won't begin until around Thanksgiving, best case.