



NEW ENGLAND'S NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

CAPE COD TIMES

The Cape and Islands' Daily Newspaper © 2012

capecodONLINE.com

Vol. 76, No. 260

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2012

\$1.00

■ Tens of thousands lose power across the Cape and Islands.

■ South- and east-facing shores flooded during high tides.

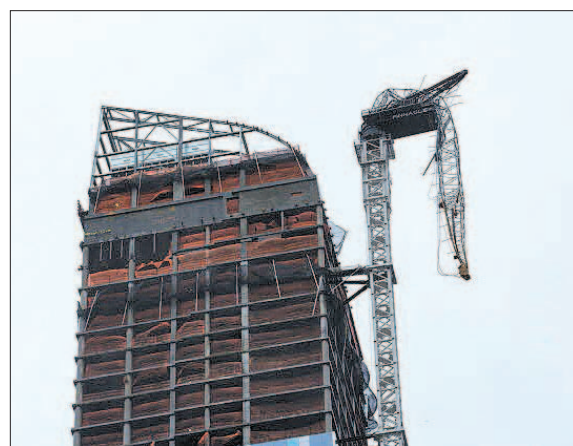
■ Storm shuts down transportation throughout the region.



RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES

Casey Callan of Sandwich and Puerto Rico braves wind and wave at the Cotuit Town Dock at 12:45 p.m. Monday, just at high tide. Compared with hurricanes she's experienced in her other home, she said, Sandy left her underwhelmed.

A Sandy mess



JOHN MINCHILLO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A construction crane atop a high-rise in New York City dangles precariously 74 floors above the street after collapsing Monday. Story A5

Superstorm smashes into the coast

By KATIE ZEZIMA and ERIN McCLAM
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - Superstorm Sandy slammed into the New Jersey coastline with 80 mph winds Monday night and hurled an unprecedented 13-foot surge of seawater at New York City, threatening its subways and the electrical system that powers Wall Street. At least four deaths were blamed on the storm, and the presidential campaign ground to a halt a week before Election Day.

Sandy knocked out power to at least 3.1 million people, and New York's main utility said large sec-

see HURRICANE, page 4

HURRICANE SANDY

Photo and videos

To see a photo gallery of Hurricane Sandy's impact on the Cape and video of the storm, go to:

www.capecodonline.com/media

Related stories, emergency numbers, NStar outage map, shelter locations and more:

www.capecodonline.com/hurricane

Inside

■ Weather forces more cancellations. A2

■ See a photo page of Monday's storm. A3

■ Columnist Sean Gonsalves: Hurricane dredges up memories of infamous storm. A4

Hurricane-force winds and high seas lash the Cape, downing tree limbs and forcing widespread road closures

By PATRICK CASSIDY
pcassidy@capecodonline.com

WEST BARNSTABLE - Seconds after the power went out at the Exit 6 rest area Monday afternoon, Bruce Knox called out to the members of his electric-line crew.

"We're gonna be getting a call," the 30-year utility veteran from Kentucky said.

As Hurricane Sandy crashed into the Eastern Seaboard, its effects were felt across an enormous region, including Cape Cod and the Islands, where high seas, hurricane-force wind gusts and power outages plagued communities.

By 10 p.m. Monday, 42,800 electric customers on Cape Cod and the Islands were without power, down from 57,000 earlier in the day.

NStar distributes power to about 197,700 customers on the Cape and Martha's Vineyard.

National Grid distributes electricity to 12,676 customers on Nantucket.

Knox and the two other members of his Asplundh tree crew were among about 300 utility workers and contractors NStar brought to the Cape from as far away as Texas, Florida and the Midwest, utility spokesman Michael Durand said.

Workers staged in Westwood on Sunday, he said, and will be redirected to the areas where the storm has hit hardest.

Knox wasn't so impressed with how New Englanders trim trees around the power lines.

"We clear ours from the ground to the sky," he said.

Utilities were under increased pressure to respond swiftly to Hurricane Sandy after per-

see SANDY, page 10



RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES

Coastal geologist Greg Berman monitors the cuts at the Popponneset Beach spit during Hurricane Sandy on Monday.

Exposed spits brace for the worst

By MARY ANN BRAGG
mbragg@capecodonline.com

Back in the 1960s, the spit at the mouth of Popponneset Bay was 250 feet wide and 13 feet above sea level, with a boating and beach house and a parking lot. But wind, surf and powerful storms have wrought significant changes, including washing the sand north-

ward until now the spit is only about 70 feet wide.

Those same sources of change were at work Monday.

The spit was one of the areas erosion experts were watching, as they waited to see how Hurricane Sandy would claw at the Cape's shoreline.

see EROSION, page 4

Sightseers test Sandy's temper

From shutterbugs to kayakers, Cape Codders can't resist the lure of a hurricane.

By DOUG FRASER
dfraser@capecodonline.com

ORLEANS - Zach Terry, his wife, Michelle, and their two children spent Monday touring: a stop at the beach in Chatham,

lunch at the Land Ho! and then off to Nauset Beach in Orleans.

Thanks to mild temperatures and little rain, beach roads, parking lots and landings were jammed with people defying governmental advice to stay off the roads and willing to endure a brief lashing by wind, sand and salt spray to witness Hurricane Sandy. The Harwich family spent the morning at

see SIGHTSEERS, page 4

"I've never lived on the Cape with a storm like this, so it's a pretty cool experience."

DUNCAN KIMBAL
East Falmouth

WEATHER

Windy with scattered showers today; highs in the 60s. B8

INDEX

Advice	C4	Opinion	A8
Arts & Entertainment	B6	Television	C4
Business	C1		
Cape & Islands	A3		
Comics	B7		
Crossword	C8		
Massachusetts	A7		
Nation & World	A5		
Obituaries	C5		



6 31108 00001 4

Hurricane: Sandy brings 'highest storm surges ever'

from A1

tions of Manhattan had been plunged into darkness by the storm. Water pressed into the island from three sides.

Just before its center reached land, the storm was stripped of hurricane status, but the distinction was purely technical, based on its shape and internal temperature. It still packed hurricane-force wind, and forecasters were careful to say it remained every bit as dangerous to the 50 million people in its path.

As the storm closed in, it smacked the boarded-up big cities of the Northeast corridor – Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston – with stinging rain and gusts of more than 85 mph. It also converged with a cold-weather system that turned it into a superstorm, a monstrous hybrid consisting not only of rain and high wind but snow.

Sandy made landfall at 8 p.m. near Atlantic City, which was already mostly underwater and saw a piece of its world-famous

Boardwalk washed away earlier in the day.

Authorities reported a record surge more than 13 feet high at the Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan, from the storm and high tide combined.

In an attempt to lessen damage from saltwater to the subway system and the underground electrical network that underlies the city's financial district, New York City's main utility cut power to about 6,500 customers in lower Manhattan. But a far wider swath was hit

with blackouts caused by flooding and transformer explosions. The subway system was shut down Sunday night.

Airlines canceled more than 12,000 flights, disrupting the plans of travelers all over the world, and storm damage was projected at \$10 billion to \$20 billion, meaning it could prove to be one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history.

The four deaths were in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New York. Among them were two people killed by

falling trees.

Sandy, which killed 69 people in the Caribbean before making its way up the Atlantic, began to hook left at midday toward the New Jersey coast.

The storm lost its status as hurricane because it no longer had a warm core center nor the convection – the upward air movement in the eye – that traditional hurricanes have, but it was still as dangerous as it was when it was considered a hurricane, according to National Hurricane Center spokesman

Dennis Feltgen.

While the hurricane's 90 mph winds registered as only a Category 1 on a scale of five, it packed "astoundingly low" barometric pressure, giving it terrific energy to push water inland, said Kerry Emanuel, a professor of meteorology at MIT.

"We are looking at the highest storm surges ever recorded" in the Northeast, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director for Weather Underground. "The energy of the storm surge is off the charts, basically."

Stormy trick or treat?

It's an adrenaline rush, racing against the clock, stocking up on provisions and going through the rest of the batten-down-the-hatches checklist.

But maybe because meteorologists seem to often be wrong in their predictions of impending doom, the prelude to a threatening storm doesn't usually concern me.

And then I spoke to Blue Hill Observatory executive director and Yarmouthport resident Charles Orloff Monday morning.

Of course, it was too early to tell how bad things would get, he told me. But, as he tracked Sandy making her way up the Eastern seaboard, it reminded Orloff of Halloween 1991 – "The Perfect Storm."

I saw the movie, but I didn't remember how it affected us on land, probably because I may have still been involuntarily living off the grid in the wake of Hurricane Bob.

And I didn't want to hear Orloff or anyone else compare Sandy to the 1991 storm, even with caveats. I can't stand to be without power. *Sandy, please be another over-hyped dud.*

But just out of curiosity, other than the eerily similar timing of Sandy, I wanted to know if there were any other indications Mother Nature might try to give us another haunting Halloween story.

Orloff wasn't going to step out on a limb and start making fearful forecasts. He had his own tree limbs to worry about, noting that he has lost 23 trees on his property to storm damage over the years. Instead, he jumped in his Jeep and brought me his "Great Halloween Gale" file folder. It was about 6 inches thick, filled with newspaper clippings, marine warnings, meteorological maps and observatory reports.

Tucked inside was the Blue Hill Observatory Bulletin for the Winter of 1991. The front of the bulletin is ominously titled "The Great Halloween Gale of 1991" and has a picture of an angry white-crested wave splashing against the base of the Portland Head Lighthouse in Maine.

Underneath the photo is a quotation from the book of Psalms: "The waters have lifted, oh Lord; the waters have lifted up their voice; the waters have lifted up their pounding waves (Psalm 93:4)."

The Observatory narrative recounted the "peculiar set of weather events that culminated in one of the most vicious storms of the century."

On Monday, Oct. 28, 1991, the upper Midwest had been hit with "blinding snow." In the East, a massive high-pressure ridge had built up over the Gulf

of St. Lawrence, pushing a cold front off the New England coast.

A low-pressure system fresh off the Great Lakes was threatening to kick up an ocean storm due east of New England. Meanwhile, the bulletin said, Hurricane Grace had "moved erratically northwest, then northeast for 24 hours before establishing a straight easterly course by the afternoon of the 28th ... a classic omega block was firmly in place."

This time, forecasters had been warning of Sandy's likely collision with a cold front from the West, which could turn into a "superstorm" that could creep along the Eastern seaboard for days.

According to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research and the National Center for Atmospheric Research, "thanks to a strong upper-level storm dipping into the eastern U.S., and an extremely strong center of high pressure toward Greenland, the storm is expected to take a grand counterclockwise loop and arc northwest, which would ... drive it well inland."

Also, forecasters were seeing record-low barometer readings, which were expected to increase the storm's ferocity.

When the Great Gale of '91 stormed through here, the observatory reported, "the first strong wind surge had begun to batter the Cape, with Chatham reporting gusts to 53 mph, Falmouth 52 mph and Kalmus Beach in Hyannis 51 mph. Low stratocumulus clouds raced across the afternoon sky as gale-force winds drove the pounding surf against Cape Cod's east-facing shore."

In Orloff's file, there were newspaper clips of the pounding the east-facing Outer Cape took when the protective barrier dune at Ballston Beach in Truro was deluged, making Provincetown a temporary island.

The Cape Cod Times Nov. 1, 1991, headline was "Nor'easter gouges beaches." Even a week later, the Times was still running stories about "Cape lobstermen counting up their losses," while The Inquirer and Mirror on Nantucket declared: "Nameless storm worst since 1908."

Perhaps I should've taken Sandy more seriously.

But, if Orloff's Halloween tale turns out to be a prophetic premonition, there is a bright side: I may one day be able to tell my grandkids about the time Sandy came knocking on our doors with a hooked arm, and howled, "Trick or Treat?"

Email Sean Gonsalves at sgonsalves@capecodonline.com.



Sean GONSALVES



Megan Harden, left, and her sister Nora swing their children Neve and Lila on the deck of the Barnstable Yacht Club Monday afternoon. Many people traveled to the shoreline to see firsthand the hurricane's effect on the Cape.

STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES

Sightseers: Gawkers can't resist

from A1

a crowded parking lot overlooking Lighthouse Beach, which gave them front-row seats as high winds and surf pounded the Cape.

"This is nice; it's not bad at all," said Michelle Terry as she stood at Nauset, even though sand blasted their skin like flying needles and they all had to lean into the wind to remain upright.

The Terrys didn't have the typical hurricane outfit – foul-weather gear and boots – but were dressed in long-sleeve T-shirts and jeans, clothing more suited for a mild fall day. The youngest, Allie, 6, ambled down the beach boardwalk dressed in a flimsy Halloween costume to see what Sandy had to offer the Cape.

Without rain, weather conditions made many people braver than usual during a storm. A summerlike traffic jam formed at noon on the road into the parking lot at Nauset Beach.

"It's an event; you have to

go and see what's going on," said Bernie Werschler, 74, of Chatham. Standing on the deck outside the harbor master's office, Werschler and his wife, Barbara, 74, watched as, in the distance, a line of white foam appeared to envelop the cottages on North Beach as waves washed over the low-lying island.

Meanwhile, just down the road at Nauset Light Beach in North Eastham, people braved waves of wind-driven sand to walk down to a landing on a high bluff overlooking the white frothy sea to take pictures.

The stairs below, which were blocked off by the Cape Cod National Seashore staff, have been swept away by storms before.

"This is the place to go," said Jennifer Glidden, of Brewster, taking in the scene with family. "It's absolutely amazing."

Monday morning in Falmouth, dozens strolled along a concrete walk above the beach on Grand Avenue and Surf Drive, some taking pictures.

"I've never lived on the Cape with a storm like this, so

it's a pretty cool experience," said Duncan Kimbal, 23, who moved to East Falmouth from Western Massachusetts about seven months ago.

By mid-morning, parts of Surf Drive and Menauhant Road were closed to traffic, with parts of Menauhant Road under 2 feet of water by noon.

"My love of the ocean always brings me out," said Jeff Penta of Falmouth.

In Sandwich, Jon Caron was on Town Neck Beach near Hemisphere Restaurant snapping photos of his son, Tyler, 11, and Patrick Pyke, 11.

"We just wanted to see Mother Nature at its best," Caron said as waves crashed against the shore and gusts of wind pushed him back.

At the nearby Sandwich Boardwalk, some people splashed through the water that covered the top of the long stretch of boardwalk, while others climbed to the top of the stairs to see what type of battering the barrier beach's dunes were taking.

Paul Schrader, a local activist who has attempted to get

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to admit that Cape Cod Canal jetties are starving the beach of sand, was out with his wife inspecting the early erosion and damage.

"Obviously, this is a serious event not just for Town Neck but for all of the Cape," Schrader said. He went out and took photographs of the pre-storm beach two days ago so he'd be able to show the destruction caused by Sandy.

There are always some who can't just stand by and watch.

Dominic Taravella, 27, of Brewster went kayaking Monday with a friend at about 1:30 p.m. in Pleasant Bay. They enjoyed themselves at first, since the water and the wind were warm, Taravella said. The 6-foot swells in a kayak were exciting – until Taravella let his guard down and capsized.

The pair came out of the water unharmed but humbled.

Staff writer Heather Wysocki, Sean Teehan, K.C. Myers, Jason Kolnos and George Brennan contributed to this report.

Yarmouth firefighters kept hopping

By JON OFFREDO
joffredo@capecodonline.com

YARMOUTH – Tearing down Old Main Street amid a flash of red and white, with sirens blaring but barely audible over the whipping winds, the Yarmouth Fire Department was en route to take care of just one of the many problems brought to the Cape by Hurricane Sandy on Monday.

As of 7 p.m., the department, the busiest on the Cape on a normal day, had dealt with more than 50 calls – everything from downed wires and util-

ity poles on fire to trees into houses and medical issues. On an average day the department deals with 15 to 18 calls.

"We dealt with a ton of small stuff today," Lt. Mike McCarthy said. "But it could get bigger if we don't go out to deal with it."

One such instance came after 6:15 p.m., when McCarthy and the other two crew members of Engine 43 were dispatched to the parking lot at Parker's River Beach in South Yarmouth for a pole on fire.

When they arrived, they found the pole smoking and swaying in the wind. Everyone on the scene was amazed the pole was still standing. Crews quickly dealt with it, spraying it with a mixture of water and sudsy foam, which circled around in the wind like snow.

Back on the second floor of the main station, seven or so sat in brown leather recliners surrounding a flat-screen television to watch true-crime shows, waiting for the next call to come through.

They didn't sit for long Mon-

day afternoon; the power flickered on and off and ambulance crews were dispatched as a string of calls came through.

And again just after 6 p.m., with pasta bubbling on the stovetop and sausage sizzling in pans as crews tried to take what time they could to eat dinner, another patch of calls came in.

"This isn't as bad as Hurricane Bob was – there was some building damage then," Lt. Bob Kittila said.

"It's going a bit better this time."

They didn't sit for long Mon-

Erosion: Early-season storms wreak havoc in fragile areas

from A1

The worst damage was expected to be to the south and the barrier beaches in Chatham.

At around 1:30 p.m. Monday, coastal geologist Greg Berman visited the Popponesset spit for the second time in a day.

Berman, who works for Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and Woods Hole Sea Grant, recorded new over-washes, part of a statewide monitoring effort through the state Office of Coastal Zone Management. He'll return this morning and also check on hot spots in Dennis and Falmouth.

A storm surge of 3 to 6 feet was expected in the region through this morning, the National Weather Service said.

Near high tide on Monday, the spit appeared to be less than 10 feet wide and about 5 feet high, Berman said.

At the beach at the end of Wading Place Road, waves reached 5 and 6 feet, crashing over stairs that led to the sand.

"I'm not saying the spit is going away anytime soon," Berman said. "But this storm is going to hit us for maybe three high tides. It's huge."

In another of the Cape's vul-

nerable points, the surviving cottages on Chatham's North Beach Island seemed to have stood the worst. White water seemed to have washed over the end of the island where most of the remaining half-dozen cottages are located, but they were all still standing at the end of day.

The waves hitting the Cape's southern coastline had gathered strength over a long distance, from somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean directly east of Hurricane Sandy, in what might be called the 3-o'clock position, coastal engineer Bob Hamilton

of the Woods Hole Group firm in Falmouth said Monday.

Ocean waves gather strength because of wind speed, the length of time the wind has blown and the distance the wind has traveled across open water. The kind of coastal erosion Cape Cod will experience in Hurricane Sandy is a combination of wave energy and surge, meaning the powerful waves reach onto land beyond normal high-tide level and pull sand back into the ocean, according to Hamilton.

Man-made structures and land elevation are also factors

that explain differing erosion rates in different parts of the Cape, Berman said.

The shoreline along Nantucket Sound in particular is vulnerable because there are so many man-made structures that are meant to stop or divert the movement of sand, such as jetties, groins and seawalls. Those structures block sediment movement along the beach and lead to uneven distribution of sand, Berman said.

"The Nantucket Sound side, it's a fairly sand-starved side," he said.

Early winter storms, such as

Hurricane Sandy, that pull sand off the beach can leave shorelines vulnerable throughout the winter, said coastal geologist Mark Borrelli of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies.

"Now, you can lose so much of it, you don't have that insurance through the winter," Borrelli said. "By the time you get to February, you don't have any beach. You don't want to see early-season storms."

Staff writers Doug Fraser and Heather Wysocki contributed to this report.