HURRICANE HUGO
STORM OF THE CENTURY
SEPTEMBER, 1989

- Over 200 Exclusive Photos From The Caribbean Through The Carolinas
- Interviews With Survivors And Heroes
- Hugo Takes On Mickey Spillane
- Exclusive Interview With The Man Who Flew The Eye
- The Hurricane Hall of Infamy
- Hugo's Youngest Survivor
- Maps, Charts And Satellite Photos
Thursday morning, September 21, 1989, as Hurricane Hugo drove toward the South Carolina coast, residents of the Conway-Myrtle Beach area join in a mass exodus along Hwy 544 to escape the storm's fury.

Upon returning to their homes, residents found the utter devastation wrought by the winds and waters of the hurricane.

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THE COVER STORY
Our magazine cover is the now-famous satellite photograph of Hurricane Hugo and the aftermath of the storm passing over the South Carolina coast at 12:01 AM EST on August 27, 1989. The photograph was taken by a US Weather Satellite known as GOES-7, a geosynchronous Environmental Satellite in geosynchronous orbit. The photo was published and distributed as a quick information product by the National Hurricane Center.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE — HUGO
It was my ambition when I first began assembling this publication that it would be passed down from generation to generation of Hugo survivors. I couldn't help but feel that I would be leaving a personal legacy.

Hugo is not a tragedy. It is a story of heroism, determination, and resilience. It is a story of how we can come together and overcome even the most devastating natural disasters. It is a story of recovery and renewal.

This publication contains a collection of stories and photographs from individuals who were affected by Hugo. It is a tribute to the courage and strength of those who survived and are now rebuilding their lives.

We hope that this publication will provide comfort and inspiration to those who were affected by Hugo, and that it will serve as a reminder of the power of human spirit in the face of adversity.
The Barrier Islands bore the brunt of the storm. The Ben Sawyer Bridge connecting Sullivan's Island to the mainland was suspended, and it was two days before residents were permitted to visit the island.
Devastation of a Forest

by Holly and Howard Elyson

On the morning of September 21, 1989, the 250,000-acre Francis Marion National Forest was a thriving timberland with magnificent stands of longleaf and loblolly pines. One day later, following the unlaughed at Hurricane Hugo, it was a forest of broken trees. Three-fourths of the great pines were on the ground. Some trees were splintered and some uprooted, but the vast majority of them were simply sheared off at a height of 10-25 feet above the ground. While the visual impact of this scene is staggering, the financial and environmental impacts are even worse. According to USDA Forest Service Reports dated October 5, 1989, "Temporary timber volume loss estimates range from 700-1000 million board feet (enough to make a 12-inch-wide board stretching around the world 5-7 times), The storm blew down estimated at approximately $95,000,000 to $115,000,000."

The Forest Service estimates to salvage at least 250 million board feet of saw timber — a quantity which represents about a third of what is in the stand and five times the normal harvest of 45 million board feet. This is in addition to the long-term problems for wood-using industries. Initially, these industries will have to expand their production facilities to accommodate the enormous amount of timber that will be available. Subsequently, when rot and insects preclude further use of downed trees, they will not have sufficient timber to maintain their former production. This will result in a loss of jobs generated by tree harvesting operations in the Forest.

In addition, Charleston and Berkeley Counties will suffer significant revenue losses from the timber shortfall. Again, according to the USDA report, "Berkeley County normally receives $85,000-$1,000,000 and Charleston County normally receives $260,000 as their portion of the receipts (from timber sales). Total revenues paid to the counties since the Forest was established in the late 1930s is about $25,000,000."

Another serious problem created by the hurricane is the increased fire hazard. The dead trees and vegetation on the ground result in what the Forest Service refers to as "extreme fuel loading." When the trees and vegetation dry out in the spring, they will become the fuels for potential fires. In addition, normal fire-fighting techniques will be severely hampered by the downed trees. These procedures rely heavily on tractor-pulled plows cutting a line down to the soil and encircling the fire. This will become extremely difficult with so many trees on the ground. Prevention efforts and public awareness of the problems will have to be stepped up in order to reduce the chances of forest fires.

Wildlife in the Forest has also been adversely affected — the greatest damage being done to the habitats of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW). This small bird, about 7 inches long, is on the list of endangered species. Prior to the hurricane, the Francis Marion Forest had one of the largest and most viable RCW populations in the world.

The RCW needs large old pine trees in which to excavate its nesting and roosting cavities. They feed on insects in nearby pine trees (foraging habitat). Most of the nesting and foraging habitats used by the RCW were destroyed by the massive blowdown of the trees. Studies are currently underway to determine the long-term effects of this situation on these birds.

Insofar as the deer and turkey populations are concerned, the Forest Service expects the deer herds to increase as a result of the significant amount of new forage that has been created. The turkey population is expected to decrease.

The recreational services of the Forest have also been affected. The 102 miles of hiking, horseback, motorcycle and canoe trails are virtually impassable due to fallen trees and debris. All 11 recreation areas, which provide camping, picnicking and boating facilities, have been extensively damaged. The Forest Service is presently working on a 30-year plan for its recreational services and some of the facilities may be altered or upgraded during the ensuing refurbishment program.

The Francis Marion has a Seed Orchard which produces genetically superior seeds (faster growing, more disease-resistant) for reforestation of National Forest timberland. The orchard was left with only about 10% of its trees standing. The replacement trees are not expected to produce significant amounts of seed until about the year 2015.

Over the next several years the recreational areas of the Forest will be rebuilt and the trails will be cleared and reopened. The man-made facilities will be returned to their original condition, or even improved. For the trees, however, this will not be so. A few short years is not a significant period of time for a living system that requires decades to reach maturity.

Currently, the Forest Service is working with all of their available resources to remove fallen trees and replant new ones. Despite these heroic efforts, it will be an entire generation before the Francis Marion National Forest looks as it did on the morning of September 21, 1989.

Media Strike Back

By the time Hurricane Hugo had completed its devastating journey through the Carolinas, most of the services that are essential to our society were in shambles. Electrical power was non-existent, water and sewer systems were severely damaged if not totally inoperable, roads were extremely hazardous, and many people were left without the basic necessities of life. The one thing we had was communications. Everyone owned a portable radio, and, thanks to underground cables and modern telecommunications technology, most people had access to working telephones.

Unfortunately, many of the local television and radio stations suffered extensive damage to their broadcast facilities. In addition, the people who staff these stations had serious problems of their own. And while most of us were clear of our yards and repairing our homes, the people in the media had to place their personal lives on hold and tend to the business of getting their stations back on the air. The following are some of their stories.

WKQB — 107.5 FM

The Rock-And-Rollers Come Through

by Howard Elyson

There are few things in heaven or on earth that can stifle Q107 DJ Michael D when he wants to speak. Hurricane Hugo was one of them. For the record, WKQB was silenced at 12:20 AM on Friday, September 22, when power was lost at its remote transmitter located in Ridgeville, S.C., about 30 miles northwest of Charleston. It was the last local radio station left on the air.

Q107 returned to the air at 9:00 PM on Friday when the Edisto Electric Cooperative did the nearly impossible job of restoring power to the Ridgeville transmitter in less than one day. For six continuous days, WKQB broadcast hurricane recovery information without airing a single commercial and playing only an occasional song to break the tension.

In addition to Jeff Williams and Michael D., the other on-air people included Barry (Man of Danger) Hall, Craig Russell, Mary Russell and Operations Manager Roger Gattiner. Q107 DJ Dominica was stationed at the Charleston County Emergency Operations Center during this period.

When I did the interview with WKQB, the first person I talked to was Craig Russell. Russell appeared to be a rather rational guy who led me to assume that the election assumption that I was dealing with a rational radio station. I asked him to describe the scene at the station during that frenzied week.

"Basically, the place looked like an evacuation shelter," said Russell. "Not only were all the station personnel around, but so were their families, husbands, wives, kids and pets. It was like a giant indoor campground."

He then told me that if I wanted the story of what happened the night of the hurricane, I needed to talk to Michael D who was at the station that night. Mr. D happened to be on the air at the time he got back into the broadcast booth which is something like entering the lion's den when the lion is hungry.

He introduced me to Mike who immediately grabbed the microphone and...
Hugo At A Glance

by Claudia Allen

apparently touched down following the first hurricane-force winds slamming into the barrier islands south of James Island

KIAWAH, SOUTH CAROLINA

Kaibah was unharmed. The fire Department had its first report of fire damage, but it was quickly extinguished.

SEABROOK, SOUTH CAROLINA

The failure of the sea barrier resulted in severe structural damage to buildings.

HUNTING ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

The island was virtually unharmed, with only six trees uprooted.

EDisto ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

Edisto Island was lucky, with some flooding and some wind damage.

JOHNS ISLAND AND JAMES ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

The islands were largely unaffected, with some minor damage.

FOLLY BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

This oceanfront town of about 2,000 people lost 34% of its homes and was left in tatters.

SULLIVAN’S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

Older homes on the beachfront were more severely damaged. One front-row house was blown off its foundation and 100 feet of beachfront houses were flooded.

CASSITYLAYS, SOUTH CAROLINA

The total number of deaths associated with Hugo is estimated to be at least 82.

Pawleys Island, SOUTH CAROLINA

Pawleys Island was hit hard by Hugo, with some minor flooding and wind damage.

Murrells Inlet, SOUTH CAROLINA

The storm surge of 11 feet ravaged older homes along the beachfront but spared newer ones.

GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA

The marina was damaged, but boats were saved. There was widespread flooding along the historic waterfront, and some structures were damaged.

Mcclellanville, SOUTH CAROLINA

A tiny village of about 600 residents was hit hard by Hugo, with some flooding and minor damage.

MT. PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA

Boats and infrastructure were damaged, but the village was largely intact.

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GARDEN CITY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Garden City, astride a narrow isthmus extending between Murrells Inlet and the Atlantic Ocean, was battered by hurricanes and hotels and condominium complexes that appeared invincible. The waves were perching on cliffs of sand, their piling and foundation under strain. It is only the strongest steel and concrete structures survived. Ninety percent of the homes were destroyed. ‘It’s just totally destroyed,’ said Horry County Administrator M. L. Love. ‘There is no front row. There’s some pilings sticking up, that’s about it.’

MYRTLE BEACH AND NORTH BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

From Cherry Grove South to Little River South Beach, beachfront motels were heavily damaged, some completely destroyed. Homes and motels along Cherry Grove Beach had caved in. ‘The first thing that hit us was an 80-foot trees hanging from windows, beds, roofing and into the rooms,’ said one of the homeowners. Businesses were closed, water mains broke, there was no power or telephones. The smell of natural gas from broken lines filled the air. Equally as bad were the reports of people being swept away. Said Rep. Dick Elliot, D-Horry, ‘I don’t think there’s 5% of our sand dunes left.’ Mobile homes rested in the middle of the Ocean Boulevard near Springfield Pier, which had lost all but 150 feet of its length. The Grand Strand Amusement Park lost all its piers; the ride motor was intact, but the merry-go-round was damaged. At Myrtle Beach, some people dined in their cars, fishing pier, picnic shelter and nearly all the boardwalk was destroyed. The area 13.6-foot tide. Town Hall was a total loss.

— one house landed in the road in front of the Hall. An estimated 50% of the homes had been completely destroyed, and 50 people were arrested for looting on the beachfront district. The town lost 20 patrol cars at the police station; they filled up with water as it submerged. According to the superintendent, 1,500 of acres of trees were left homeless.

AWENDAW, SOUTH CAROLINA

Awendaw was almost woven into the ocean by the 3-foot tide, the highest in this century; it was the hardest hit community. The Awendaw Creek Bridge on U.S. 17 collapsed.

NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Businesses on both sides of the Ashley River were lost, and those not destroyed were damaged, losing the value of their contents and roofs. Lines of utility poles closed part of the roads, downed trees were clogged by fallen trees and power lines. On Monday morning, the area was deserted except for the city property, Park Circle, lost nearly every tree. Logan Driggers, an area resident, said in a clear away about 400 pines and oaks. ‘The people are going to never look the same in my lifetime,’ said Mayor John E. Bourne. ‘It’s just devastating.’ The City Hall, too, was damaged and could not be used until repairs were made.

BERKELEY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Berkeley County suffered far more fatalities than any other coastal Carolina, with eight deaths. Destroyed were 1,165 homes, 414 homes and apartments, with 4,929 severely damaged, leaving only 17,000 homeless in the county. There was nearly 88 million

— in damage to the county’s schools, and 70% to 80% of the trees were damaged. Only the county’s historic properties were damaged and survival, 400 old farms scattered through the county were left alone. In St. Stephen, 20 miles East of McClellanville at least 1,500 acres of farmland were homeless.

DOORCHER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

This county, too, suffered destruction of homes and businesses. In the SUMMERVILLE area, eight houses, 45 mobile homes and 360 mobile homes were destroyed; 608 received major damage and 4,653 more were slightly damaged. The structure of the Second Presbyterian Church steeple fell and the roof was torn off, and two-thirds of the trees in Flowertown’s City Park was boarded by Hugo. Most serious damage was to the Galleria Shopping Mall and the roof of the building was forced to close. In RICHMOND'S area, six homes were destroyed; 10 mobile homes were homeless; an additional 41 houses and 23 mobile homes suffered major damage.

ORANGEBURG COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Orangecounty, the country’s seat and largest city, is 16 miles northwest of Charleston, where Hugo made landfall. It received heavy damage, with many homes losing power knocked out. Agriculture in Orangeburg County was considered a total loss. Clouds were substantially damaged and public buildings were assessed at $257 million. The Forest Service reported severe damage and one resident of a wooded community called the tree damage ‘astounding.’ In South Carolina, state wide frame homes in low income pockets were lost, as 75 people were stranded at Emmanuel United Methodist Church. A 13-month-old boy was killed near Myrtle Beach when his mobile home overturned. 220 houses, mobile homes and structures were destroyed, and 980 more suffered major damage.

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

The state’s capital reported damage of cars damaged and power lines. The storm flattened ‘The Bluebird,’ the Clemson University facility at the University of South Carolina. Power was out for 115,000 people.

LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

400 people there were without electricity; gusts of wind nearly 100 mph were reported in Richland County. EAS- TOVER and GADSDEN were severely damaged, and in Estover, a man was killed when a tree fell on his car.

FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Access was cut off on two sides, with buildings down and damaged; the streets were littered with shingles, glass, aluminum, plastic signs and fallen trees. Tornadoes, an 1144 room motel at the 1-75 and S.C. 52 intersection, was filled with debris from the coast. It pealed the roofs from five two-story complexes, scattering debris on cars in the parking lot. The Florence Air and Aviation Management Building had been damaged with windows. The building that was accounted for 96% of Florence County’s $2.9 million in damages. The building was assessed at total of $2.5 million.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

200 miles from landfall. Charlotte was surprised by Hugo’s punch so fast, and kept its inland. Winds gusting up to 90 mph and sustained winds of 70 mph ripped through the city about 8:00 AM Friday, September 22nd, slamming trees into homes, shattering glass in skyscrapers, snapping utility poles and power lines, sheddingawnings and signs. The main intersection of Trade and Tryon Streets was blocked by debris from a construction site across from the Charlotte Motor Speedway. The U.S. District Courthouse on Trade Street, where PTL, Embassy Suites was on trial, was closed and the court, the public, and guests with using flashlights to dial telephones.

MOSS CREEK, COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

510,000 people were the natural gas leaks, some roads were blocked. Trees were down, some homes and other structures damaged.

PIEDMONT, COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Similar rough treatment was experienced and loss of power and water. UNION COUNTY suffered damage through its road structures throughout, and turkey houses were damaged. Mobile homes were extensively hurt, and roofs of two school buildings fell. A six-month-old boy died in his crib when a tree smashed into his home. In STANLEY COUNTY, Sanford Gymnasium collapsed, and Rock Hill delivery to Albemarle was made difficult because of power outages. In CATSWA COUNTY, a ten-year-old was seriously injured when a tree fell on her. She was rescued for an hour.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Considerable erosion occurred on beaches, many sand dunes were washed away. In Bath, 170 feet from peakon-beach houses to the tide, and debris was scattered and washed away. One house was destroyed and more homes were condemned. At HOLDEN, one cottage stood on the beach, with others close to joining it. Oceanfront condominiums were estimated at $25-$30 million. LONG CAY and VAPOUN All Beached suffered from wind and wave damage.

VIRGINIA AND WEST VIRGINIA

Tropical Storm Hugo swept across the narrow isthmus from Virginia, entering West Virginia.

TAZEWELL COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Power lines and trees fell, gusts were clocked at 81 mph, and two miles were killed. There was less rain than expected. In West Virginia’s MECER COUNTY, 45-50 mph winds toppled trees, houses, cars, trailers; the OAKDALE area was evacuated because of flooding.

PENNSYLVANIA

At 4:00 PM Friday, September 22nd, the remnants of Hugo passed just to the West of Pittsburgh. There were 15 people injured, and weather service meteorologist Alan Reznik said, ‘His punch is gone.’ Hugo died in Canada; darting through the Star Lake Valley, he was absorbed by another weather front.

(See reports from the following newspaper: The Charlotte Observer, The Charleston Post, The Providence Journal, The Atlanta Journal, Myrtle Beach Sun.)

Continued on Page 65
GEORGETOWN, SC

Before and after: The Georgetown Marina offers dramatic testimony to Hugo's power. Murrell's Inlet lost a landmark when Captain Dick's was destroyed.

PAWLEYS ISLAND, SC

Pawleys Island — The two center pictures show the 70-foot-wide breach that was cut through Pawleys Island by Hugo's tidal surge.