

Make Sure You are Prepared For Storms

Rene Lefebvre, Fire Chief

As I write this story I am watching hurricane Florence slam into the Carolinas. Mother Nature is an incredibly powerful force and for all our technical sophistication, we are at her mercy.

Some of you will remember that I wrote about protecting ourselves from storms last year. Considering the risk, I hope you won't mind a review of some important safety tips.

We must first consider the kind of storms we are likely to see here in northern New England. We are in a hurricane, snow and ice storm area. Tornados and flooding do happen locally as well. Rarely do we need to evacuate many people. Our experience trying to move people to higher ground has proven to the emergency services teams that people prefer to shelter in place. With that in mind and with the kind of weather issues we are likely to experience, sheltering in place may be the safest alternative.

Okay, we have established that making our home a safe shelter is likely a good choice. Let's make a plan to do that. Make a list of items that you will need to not only ride out the storm, but also last for several days of recovery. We will consider a few ideas to get started but first look at (Ready.Gov). There are several lists of items to gather and plans for many different types of storm threats. The information is well thought out and presented to be easy to follow. Take the time to read and understand the recommendations.

The first item on your list should be drinking water. Consider purchasing a five gallon cold liquid container, it can be filled as the weather approaches while you still have power. Store a fresh case of bottled water from fall through spring. Plan to store water for toilet flushing. The bath tub is a great storage vessel. Purchase food that

is easy to prepare like canned foods that can be heated over sterno fuel or a camping propane burner. Grilled cheese is a favorite. Open your refrigerator as little as possible if power is out. I am not a big fan of candles unless they have an enclosed chimney. Batteries and flash lights should be checked for freshness and operation. Check your first aid kit. The materials age over time and should be replaced. Check all your meds and prescriptions, you should have at least a week's supply. Do not forget food, water and meds for your animals.

Make your home ready as well. Depending on the weather event, put away lawn furniture and other items that can fly in heavy wind and damage your windows. Check your home's fuel supply. Make sure to test the condition of your sump pumps. Fuel and park your car so it is headed out, backing up with a lot of debris around can be tricky.

Pay attention to weather reports and plan your activities with time to spare. Mother Nature will not wait until you are ready. As weather approaches review your storm list. Purchase fresh food supplies, check meds, and plan your activities around the pending storm.

Your emergency team will be there to assist you should you need us. However, during the worst of weather we may not be able to get to you. We have a motivated team and very good equipment. But when the roads are flooded, snow filled or covered with trees you may be on your own for some time.

This article was not written to be considered a complete list of necessary items needed to safely wait out a storm. It was written as an incentive for planning using Ready.Gov and hopefully as a bit of a nudge. The time to plan is while the sun is shining.



Learn About Local Wit & Wisdom: 'Humor in 19th Century New England'

Thursday, October 11 at 7 PM at Grange Hall

Press release

The Andover Historical Society, with a grant from New Hampshire Humanities, will sponsor a Humanities to Go program presented by storyteller Jo Radner entitled Wit and Wisdom: Humor in 19th Century New England. Free and open to the public, the program will take place at 7 PM on Thursday, October 11, at the Highland Lake Grange Hall, 7 Chase Hill Road in East Andover.

Have you ever wondered what New Englanders did on long winter evenings before cable, satellite and the internet? In the decades before and after the Civil War, our rural ancestors created neighborhood events to improve their minds. Male and female community members composed and read aloud homegrown, handwritten literary "newspapers" full of keen verbal wit. Sometimes serious, sometimes sentimental, but mostly very funny, these "newspapers" were common in villages across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and revealed the hopes, fears, humor, and surprisingly daring behavior of our forebears. Radner will share excerpts from her forthcoming book about these "newspapers," and especially material that was written in Andover.

According to Radner, East Andover was the source of one of the most important sets of documents for

her research: The Kearsarge Fountain, a handwritten newspaper of which nine issues have survived (in the NH Historical Society in Concord), were written between February 1848 and March 1850. The contents were written by local people, and the papers were edited by George E. Emery, William A. Bachelder, and Mary E. Bachelder (who later married George Emery), and were evidently kept in the Emery's Andover household. The contents of the Kearsarge Fountain are wide-ranging, including tongue-in-cheek parodies, sarcastic analyses of the folly of the Gold Rush, and of the modern passion for inventions, arguments for and against bachelorhood, and sincere poetry about the local neighborhood.

Storyteller Jo Radner received her Ph.D. from Harvard University. Before returning to her family home in western Maine as a freelance storyteller and oral historian, she spent 31 years as professor at American University in Washington, D.C., teaching literature, folklore, American studies, Celtic studies, and storytelling. She has published books and articles in all those fields, and is now writing a book titled Performing the Paper: Rural Self-improvement in Northern New England, about a 19th-century village tradition of creating and performing handwritten literary newspapers. She is past president of the American Folklore Society and the National Storytelling Network.



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