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THE REGISTER CITIZEN

Opinion: After storm, a close call and a well of relief

By Jill and Edward L. Marcus

On the Internet on Saturday, September 12 and in print on Sunday, September 13, 2020



Photo: Peter Hvizdak / Hearst Connecticut Media **PHOTO WITH INTERNET EDITIONS ONLY**
Fallen trees on a roof in the backyard of a home in Branford after an August storm.

My wife, Jill and I, have two white, standard poodle puppies. One is eight months old, Bebe, and the other Bella, who is 14 months. They both are good-natured, fun and, after the passing of our previous two dogs, have restored new life to the Marcus household.

We are fortunate to have a fenced area contiguous to the side of our home, with adequate space for romping and necessary bodily functions.

On Aug. 27, as we all know if you live in Guilford, Branford and North Haven, we experienced a strange event — call it a tornado, mini tornado, or whatever name works. The aftermath for many of us was suddenly looking like a war zone.

We are lucky to have a generator and all seemed to be as well as possible given the circumstances. No one was hurt, a lot of property damage but we and our dogs were safe.

The next day at about four in the afternoon, the two dogs, Bella and Bebe, were let out to the side of the house to what we believed was still the fenced area. At that point there was still no driveway access and the top of the driveway was being worked on.

We did not realize that the entire fence was basically down except for the very beginning, which was the part that we could see.

The dogs saw opportunity for an adventure and took off. In a bit of a panic, we then called the Police Department, Animal Services and the Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter (all of whom were helpful and incredibly supportive). My oldest daughter, Judge Shelley Marcus, and my son-in-law Ed Burke came over to help search.

I called for Bella continually, finally hearing her bark, seemingly in the area of Pine Rock Road. Shelley drove over to that road but couldn't get close because it was loaded with live wires. No luck finding the dogs. Jill and I drove around the area, also with no luck but increasing concern because of so many downed live wires. I continued to call for Bella and Bebe just about every half-hour with no result.

It was soon dark and we were beyond being discouraged. It was an excruciating feeling of gloom and doom and thinking about everything negative that could happen. The sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach made me expect the worst.

Jill asked me to open the gate to what used to be the fenced in area, I did, and we opened the slider in the house for them to use if they came back on their own.

I told Jill there was no chance that they would come back on their own. She stayed in the room with the slider door open and fell asleep on the couch. Near 11 that night, there was a bark that Jill and I recognized.

Jill yelled "Bella, Bebe" and sure enough there they were.

They were home, covered with mud right up to their necks. Where they had been, who knows. Nearly seven hours in the dark and unknown was obviously more than they wanted. They came

in a little dazed but, as always, full of love. We immediately checked for blood and any sign of injury and fortunately there was none.

The relief that we experienced is indescribable. It felt like a load of rocks had been lifted off of our chests and like hitting a home run with bases loaded.

We were ecstatic. We were a family again and the dogs, after eating anything and everything in sight, toppled on our bed, mud and all, and were rapidly asleep.

Atty. Edward L. Marcus is former chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee in Connecticut and former State Senate majority leader. Jill Marcus chairs the Branford Board of Police Commissioners.