

Social Interactions: Gustav has lost his thunder, Hanna is thundering loud regardless of what NORAD says and Ike is playing follow the leader with Josephine, bless her little heart, planning to interfere with our getting off the island next week.

One characteristic of both Kansas tornados and Caribbean Cyclones is they tend to increase social interactions. At first they draw people out to watch the clouds, and then drive them in until the wet goes away, and finally people are out again, with much to discuss. Sometimes they talk about the storm if it were severe enough. Did God have a plan, I wonder?

We were up frequently to check leaks and windows as it poured bōkits of rain during the night. We slosed down to the office early morning when the rain slowed. I had cleaned the catchments drains and discovered Madame Matillia had taken her burro to market. One of 2 available markets each week, Ti Palmiste was an enthusiastic but necessary journey for some.

While at the office the storm cycled and rain poured again. I joined the goats under the eve and watched a deserted village deal with the storm. Some kids lead burros to graze and a couple of little girls visited the only local retailer with food. They tip toed through the soggy street with a handful of rice, one sneaking some on the tip of her tongue.

A couple came out on their porch to rinse cups in the rain water from the roof, noticed me and over the noise of the rain we passed Haitian pleasantries. They stayed out for a time, smiling at me and just being there.

Eventually, we made it back up the hill to chase a soggy Henrietta Hen out of the house several times (she isn't house broken). I offered a warmer place for the two dogs curled like cinnamon rolls, shivering near the door. They stayed curled up.

Following a simple brunch of lobster that didn't make it to market and fried bread with cabbage inside, we decided to brave the strong winds and visit the sea. We were greeted by the community who offered to pose for pictures when they noticed the camera intended to photograph the waves. We know the words for wind, waves, rain, etc. so had energetic conversations.

I helped move a heavy fishing boat higher on the shore and showed my muscle to the fishermen's delight. There was more socializing and baby kissing as we traversed the flooded coastal streets and watched and listened to the roaring seas. Some youngsters were gathering "things" from the high tide area (used as community latrine) but I chickened out when offered to taste a seed or something. I had just eaten!

Now the rain is pounding, Doniz and Missoule are harmonizing "I Surrender All," and I discover I feel less homesick. I am worried about Madame Matillia out in the storm, but, on La Gonave, she isn't alone and doors will open until the storm cycles again. It is a social thing and I'm thinking somehow part of God's plan.

Shirley, again, Sousafilip, Haiti, September 2, 2008