

# Earthquakes, Hurricanes and Rainbows

By Mark Charnet

Last week, my family and I rented a nice \$1.75 million home on the beach in Manasquan. As a general rule, the Charnet family likes to celebrate the last days of summer vacation at a special location. This year, my wife Terry picked the location close to home in Manasquan, NJ. Though real estate prices have come down a great deal, summer ocean rental rates have remained high and that is one of my many reasons for not wanting to vacation at the NJ shore. My wife and her family spent every summer at the NJ shore, where my family went to the east coast of Florida in the winters. Our family destination was the intercostal waterway of Ft. Lauderdale when it was cold in NJ. In the summers if Terry and her family were not at the shore they were “up the pond” in Rockaway, NJ and my family had a circular 22 foot above ground pool that was great to create a whirlpool in with all of our friends.

So, you can see, one minor area of friction in my marriage is whether or not to go to the NJ shore, spending many thousands of dollars in rental fees each year, supporting the NJ shore economy paying \$10.00 for a bologna sandwich and a coke for one son and another \$10.00 for two slices of pizza and a root beer for the other. Let’s not forget the \$20.00 per half hour in the arcade to win a bunch of tickets to trade for a bunch of unneeded plastic crap. My wife says going to the NJ shore is a family tradition; now, remembering my profession as a financial advisor and a retirement & estate planning specialist, wouldn’t that money be better invested in the stock and bond market or in building up a kitty to secure a down payment for my kid’s first home purchase, their weddings or college education? It’s hard to compete with your wife’s “family tradition” theory even when logic and empirical evidence exists in abundance because she’s my wife and a “happy wife makes a happy life!”

On our fourth day at the shore and during a visit from my sister, her husband and their 14 month young daughter, the house started rocking back and forth, then up and down for just under a minute. I immediately realized that we were experiencing an earthquake and reached for my phone to look up “Manasquan, NJ earthquake”. The search revealed an earthquake in VA with the shock wave reaching up as high as Maine. I quickly needled my wife on another reason not to come to the NJ shore. Two doors in the house never closed properly again and the owner of the home lives in earthquake prone California, isn’t that ironic. Next we were informed by the TV news anchorman interrupting the earthquake report that Hurricane Irene was due to hit the Atlantic coast in North Carolina making its way north and right through the NJ shore. “What about that honey”, I asked sarcastically. Terry ignored me saying it’s a long way away and moving at 12 mph and anything could happen before reaching NC, let alone NJ. I said, “We’ll see”. Over the next two days the surf got rougher and the distance from the front door to the ocean got much shorter. My NJ shore loving wife while boogie-boarding and denying her age, was slammed down into the sand by the storm fueled waves, severely sprained her right wrist and ate some sand as her front tooth went through her bottom lip. I didn’t have the heart at that time to ask her about the NJ shore and family traditions; I’d save that for later.

Later that day, as the hurricane approached and the evacuation order was given by the governor, I was thinking about the rental agreement and the refund we were entitled to if an emergency evacuation order was given (the only way to get a refund I might add), Terry starts yelling from the third floor balcony, “Rainbow, Rainbow, Rainbow!!!” Well, “shore” enough two rainbows appeared side by side, starting and ending on the ocean; two complete 180 degree rainbows for everyone to take delight in witnessing. My wife was chanting to everyone with childlike enthusiasm to look overhead at the rainbows and people came running out of their homes to drink in this magical sight. After about 45 minutes, the rainbows disappeared and the reality of road closures and being enveloped by the ocean got my 2 younger boys and our daughter quickly into pack-up mode. We left Manasquan 2 hours later and one hour and 5 minutes after that we were home in Wayne. But a hurricane wasn’t far behind us and the forecast was gloomy at best. I needed to prepare our generator, the electrical cords and bottled water. A

last minute food shopping trip for essentials and flashlights and candles needed to be within reach. The Charnet's were ready; unlike in 1999 for Hurricane Floyd. Now we have French drains, double redundant sump pumps, back-up 3500 watt generators, 20 flashlights, gallons of gasoline and 100 yards of electrical cords, adaptors and a working well. Terry quickly filled the bath tubs with water for the toilets if necessary and now Irene, we were ready for your show! As it turned out, we had a few minor leaks, the power went out and the generator started on the first pull and all went well as planned! We saved our lower level from flooding since even without electricity, the pumps were pumping because we had protection, a plan and a back-up plan. We were prepared and ready for whatever Irene could dish out. Earlier in the year we hired a tree company with their crane to top off and trim all of the trees on my property from any dead or leaning limbs that would cause property damage or perhaps human injury. **Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance – Period! The 7-P's!** Whether it is portfolio protection, property protection, hurricane protection or earthquake protection, the 7-P's Prevail! Are your valuables insured? Are your properties insured? Are your cars insured? Is your life and health insured? Of course they are, aren't they? What about your retirement income? Is that insured too? If not, why not? Isn't that one of your most important assets? Don't know how to insure your retirement income? Never heard about how to do that? Want to know how much that type of portfolio insurance will cost? You'd be surprised how to learn how little it really is. Why not call me to find out more. No hype, no cost, no obligation, no kidding. Call for an appointment today or why not attend our next workshop on the subject. Beginning September 13,14 and 15<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 1-3pm and 7-9pm I will be speaking about The Trinity Method of Investing© and overcoming the five forces of portfolio demise. Will your portfolio be prepared for your next stock market tsunami? Instead of picking up the pieces and cleaning up after the storm, you could instead be marveling at the magical Rainbow of a protected portfolio and guaranteed\* income for life!

Terry and I are thinking about next summer's destination and it's a strong bet that the NJ shore will not be her first choice. As for me, I say, "It's time to create a new summer family tradition." Maybe we'll purchase a get-away lake home in the Adirondacks.

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