Living with a Legend

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– *Steve Sloan*

And the Rains Came...

Every time there is a natural catastrophe – a flood, forest fire, earthquake or hurricane – we find ourselves wondering if any Cobras or Shelbys were damaged. We should probably be thinking first about the impact on people, but what can we say? We're fixated on these cars. We suspect that many SAAC members experienced the same conflict as they watched the constant news coverage of Hurricane Harvey devastating the Houston area or as Irma blasted the Caribbean and Florida.

With Steve Sloan living outside of Houston, we held our breath waiting to hear how 6S087 made out. Images of the car submerged in six feet of water floated through our mind. People always seem to imagine a worst case scenario first.

They say that into each life some rain must fall, and it appears that owning a Shelby doesn't exempt you from that rule.

It started on a Wednesday with talk on TV about a possible hurricane making landfall on the Texas Gulf coast. Living in Pasadena (just outside of Houston) news like that got my attention. By Thursday Corpus Christi looked like the target area. Being roughly 200 miles southwest of Houston, you'd think that would give us a clean bill of health – but hurricanes are fickle things, and the people to the east of the eye always seem to get the worst beating.

Add to that, they were now predicting a double landfall – first at Corpus Christi, then back into the Gulf before heading to Houston. The good news for Houston was that it might not have hurricane force winds when it got here. The bad news was that it was going to rain for days on end. They were predicting 25 or 30 inches total.

Oh well, Robyn and I have been in this house for almost forty years now. We've been through so many hurricanes and floods that I've lost count. And we've come through alright so far. So I wasn't worried, but I did fill up a few extra gas cans for our portable generators just in case. And Robyn

The details of 6S087's 36-year rebirth were covered in the Winter, 2017 issue. Once the car was finished, Steve Sloan began picking up where he left off in 1979, when he bought the car. After being without it for more than three and-a-half decades, it was time to get reacquainted. He became, in effect, a new owner and experienced most of the first-time adventures that a new Shelby owner might typically encounter. This is the fourth installment.

double-checked our emergency food supply. We were set.

On Friday evening, August 25, 2017 a little storm called Harvey made landfall just east of Corpus Christi as a Category 4 hurricane. The Houston area was mostly unaffected and there was some hope that it would continue a path over land, thus lessening its impact on Southeast Texas. But that was not to be. The storm followed the early predictions and went back into the Gulf of Mexico where it set its sights on Houston. By Saturday afternoon the rain was starting to come down at our house. I'd seen worse and it was draining down the street very nicely. If it just kept that pace we'd be fine. It didn't.

Around midnight it really started pouring. Robyn and I grabbed our rain gear and rubber boots and headed to the back yard. Years of experience told us that's the first problem area. Water should drain around each side of the house on its way to the street in front and then down the road to a bayou, but that doesn't always happen naturally. We sometimes have to do a little impromptu trenching to get it flowing properly around the house instead of through it.

About two hours later it looked like we'd done everything we could on that front so we went inside to regroup and analyze the situation. It was looking bad. The water was completely over the street and rising toward our foundation. We started preparing to take on water.

The number one priority was to raise the Shelby. It's worth twice as much as our home at this point and it's easier to jack the car up than the house. And, yes, it's insured, but the first restoration took thirty-six years. Who wants to go through that again? I grabbed the floor jack and two sets of ramps. I jacked up the front, one side at a time, and shoved a ramp under each wheel. But the rear gave me pause.

My plan was to simply place the pad of the floor jack under the differential and raise the rear end until I could get the other pair of ramps under those tires. But I realized that the only thing keeping the car from rolling was having the parking brake set and the car in gear. What was going to happen when I lifted both rear tires off the ground while the fronts were on ramps? So I called Robyn to the garage and asked her to sit in the car and push on the brake pedal while I performed the rear lift operation. It worked fine other than Robyn's fit of nervousness as the car rose under her – a very odd feeling indeed. We took some packing blankets, rolled them in extra large plastic trash bags, and placed those at the base of each garage door. That wouldn't completely stop water from coming in, but it might slow it down.

After that we went back into the house and got all the electrical things off the floor – computers, extension cords, power strips – you name it. The television was on as we were doing all of this so we could keep up with the latest predictions. It was all gloom and doom. "*Worst flood in history!*" (I guess they never heard of Noah.) "*Catastrophic!*" (I hope I never hear that word again.) "*This is going continue for at least another 3 days!*" (Gee, thanks for the encouragement.) I finally told Robyn to turn the thing off.

It was bad enough living through this without hearing a play-by-play commentary on our troubles. Besides, a glance outside revealed that the back yard had stopped draining properly and the water was within about an inch of coming into our house. So, once again we donned our rubber boots and rain gear and headed outside. This time there was nothing we could do. The backyard had quit draining because the front was now just as high. The water was lapping at my garage doors and a half-inch from coming on in. It was solid water from there to the base of the garage doors on the house across the street. There was nothing left to do. We had fought the good fight, and yet we were losing. And then…

Like a miracle you read about in story books, the rain slowed down a little. Then a little more, and then it tapered down to a light sprinkle. And the water stopped rising. Whew! About an hour later it started receding and by morning we could once again see the road in front of our house. We found out later that Pasadena had got-

ten 15 inches of rain in a three-hour time span that night.

There was plenty more rain over the next few days, and we worried and anguished over every drop for fear that this time it might be 16 inches in three hours. Eventually Harvey moved on to torment someone else. We wished them no ill will, but were happy to see it leave our area. In all, Pasadena had 46-inches of rain over the three or four days it hung around here. If there ever was a drought, it's over.

By the following Saturday I had the Shelby off the ramps and was driving around the neighborhood. It was the first chance I'd had to really look around and it was obvious that many others had not been so lucky. When you see carpet next to the road you know water got in their house. And when you see furniture stacked on top of that carpet you know it got deep. For the first time ever, I was driving my car without really enjoying it. I went straight back home and parked it back in the garage. Robyn and I had already been checking on friends and family and offering help, and donating to relief charities. After that drive we redoubled our efforts. Life is great when you're living with a legend and you can help your neighbors in need.

Photos by Robyn and Steve Sloan.