

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Sandy, an isolated event or growing pattern?

'100-year storms' are becoming the norm

People who live in areas prone to flooding or other disasters can be forgiven for thinking they've lived through so many "once in a century" weather events they mathematically must have been here since the time of the Pharaohs.

For whatever reason, destructive storms, drought-related wildfires and other events are becoming harsher and more frequent. If it's your house that gets destroyed, the debate over whether it was due to manmade global warming or long-term climatic change is beside the point.

Mitt Romney got some good laughs at the Republican convention by mocking President Barack Obama's token commitments to easing climate change. "My promise," Romney said in a non sequitur, "is to help you and your family." He didn't say exactly how he would do that, but offering to help out Americans who are the victims of natural disaster is about the least one would expect of a president.

A good place to start would be with storm mitigation. The 1968 National Flood Insurance Act was a federal insurance program aimed to encourage people in flood-prone areas to move to safer ground, or at least to flood-resistant structures, in exchange for flood insurance that no private insurer would offer because of the outsize risk. The program never fully worked as intended because of opposition from homeowners, developers and waterfront resorts.

The Census Bureau says that more than half the U.S. lives within 50 miles of the coasts. Those who live on the actual coasts favor living right on the water, especially on barrier islands that are basically moving sandbars.

The lessons of Hurricane Katrina seem to be slipping from memory. The 2005 storm was the nation's fifth deadliest, claiming more than 1,800 lives, and its most expensive, costing around \$108 billion in damages. About a third of New Orleans' population never moved back.

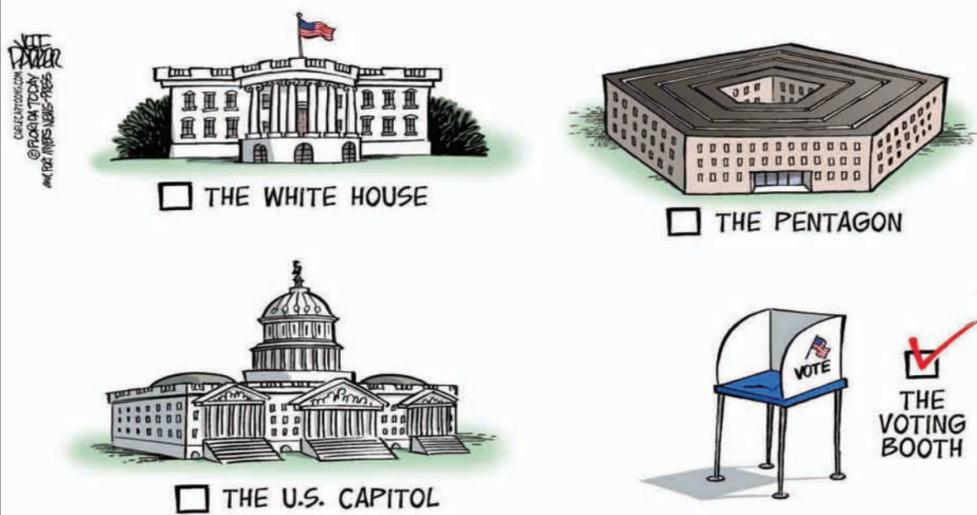
A principal reason behind Katrina's devastation: Human activity, including channels dredged in the Mississippi and its feeder rivers, destroyed protective mangrove swamps and effectively created super highways for storm surge.

While Sandy was not a particularly powerful hurricane, it had a 1,000-mile reach and killed more than 100 people in 10 states. Though the damage is still being totaled, Sandy will likely be our second most expensive storm after Katrina.

And lest the need for foresight and preparedness be lost on us, another big storm, a nor'easter, is taking aim later this week at the Delaware and Raritan bays, areas already pounded by Sandy.

Less and less does it seem that storms like Sandy are freak occurrences, "once in a century" events that now seem to occur every two or three years. We can't say we weren't warned.

Which is the Most Powerful Place in America?



Arts and Cultural District flourishes in Lynn

October was an amazing month for the Arts and Cultural District in Downtown Lynn.

LynnArts and Lynn Museum brought over 2,000 people downtown, Chronicle featured many of our best assets, and Arts After Hour's fall show *Evil Dead: The Musical* completely sold out, attracting attendees from all over the North Shore, Massachusetts and the United States.

Thank you to everyone who is spreading the word and believing in what we are doing for the entire Lynn community. The more people we can drive into the downtown area, the more dollars are spent in local shops and restaurants. The demand is increasing and more shops are opening. Jobs and tax revenue for the City of Lynn is at the core of why we do what we do.

In addition to Channel 5's Chronicle episode, *Evil Dead: The Musical* was picked up by The Boston Globe, The Phoenix, The New England Theatre Geek and The Daily Item. With this, and the increased programming at the Lynn Auditorium, people are paying attention to Lynn and starting to make our downtown a destination for entertainment.

A sold-out show is incredible (and rare), and for *Evil Dead: The Musical*, ticket sales contributed 60 per-



COREY JACKSON

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cent toward expenses. We are committed to keeping our ticket prices low so that theatre is affordable and accessible for everyone. For this show's budget, local businesses of Lynn came forward to fill a large portion of the gap and individual donations covered the rest. It's clear that we are all in this together and we can't thank you enough.

Evil Dead: The Musical cost \$22,000

to produce. This has an impressive impact on the Lynn community. According to Americans for the Arts, a group out of Washington, D.C. who created an economic impact calculator for the arts, by taking into account the \$22,000 and the 1,000 people who came to the show and also had dinner, a drink, or simply bought something at a local convenience store, our overall estimated impact to the community last month was \$42,000.

With support like yours, every month can be another October. Multiply this impact by many groups and you begin to see the potential for the Arts and Cultural District and its incredible impact on the City of Lynn.

We have come so far in a short amount of time. We are excited about the future and want to continue to grow so that we can hire the best actors and directors and continue bringing theatre to downtown Lynn. I am very much looking forward to our upcoming season. Stay tuned for more details!

In the meantime, if you would like to support Arts After Hours, please visit us at artsafterhours.com and click donate on the top left corner.

Lynn resident **Corey Jackson** is managing director of Arts After Hours.

Ahhhh, Election Day — FINALLY!

SEAN LEONARD

Electoral College system and the Buckeye State's even split of Democrat and GOP supporters.

I know plenty of Ohioans on both sides and they're great people, but enough is enough. The Presidential seal beginning in January should read: "The President of the United States of America, especially Ohio."

◆ Donald Trump's \$5 million indecent proposals to the commander in chief. The government should give him \$5,000 for a weave to once-and-for-all replace the comb-over.

◆ Undecided voter panelists of cable TV live-debate focus groups, now free to rejoin the casts of National Geographic's *Swamp People* and Bravo's *Real Housewives*.

◆ Elected office holders of both major parties appearing for planned photo-ops and press conferences to make their master-of-the-obvious public endorsement of candidates in their own party.

◆ Breaking news, election coverage pre-empting NHL hockey games ... Oh, wait, never mind!

◆ Emergency food drives organized by the altruistic Mitt Romney, of course with no hidden agenda, to help Hurricane Sandy victims in, using his words, "I think New Jersey."

◆ Private \$100,000,000-a-plate campaign fundraisers. *Note to Obama and Romney: Sorry my checks bounced, and just a suggestion: Though I don't have the opportunity to eat caviar often — and it was OK — I still prefer fried clams.*

◆ Strangers holding signs at intersections and waving to passing vehicles, oblivious to the fact they're creating a very dangerous distraction for those who are texting while driving.

On a serious note, however tired we may be with politics at the moment, please do make it to the polls today if you're registered and physically able.

Voting is one of the rights our young people are sent to war around the world to protect. It's been a grueling year of politics, but today is not about the candidates, rather about the awesome responsibility each of us has to decide the fate of our country. Apathy is not an option.

Sean Leonard is The Item's editorial page editor.

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ELECTION DAY LIVE BLOG

Join Editorial Page Editor Sean Leonard on **Itemlive.com** Tues., Nov. 6th from 5:00 – 10:00 p.m. to blog about the candidates and races that matter to you!

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