

## Of Hurricanes

Diane, fourth of the windblown sisters of the Caribbean and long overshadowed by her tempestuous sister Connie, now comes into her own as she smashes toward the Carolinas. Like her sisters Diane sprang from the Doldrums a place that means little to most of us except that the Ancient Mariner and other unfortunates were becalmed there near the Equator. The Doldrums is a place you might want to visit once but you would not want to live there. It has low barometric pressure, rising air, high humidity, cloudiness, thunderstorms, squalls and just about everything else you can think of. That's where hurricanes are born.

Students of word origins are not in agreement on the word hurricane. One school says it comes from the Portuguese out of the Caribbean word *huracan*. The aboriginal Indians referred to the cyclonic winds as *huracans*, or evil spirits, and this name was picked up by the Spaniards. It is the equivalent of the typhoon that inhabits the China seas.

How the hurricane originates and what determines its specific direction remain controversial questions. We speak of them now as having individual personalities and it must be said that the behavior of each one is that of an individual entity. For a while New England seemed immune while Florida got walloped. Then for a while they seemed bent on beating down the Carolinas. Last year only Alice went due west going through Texas and Mexico. Carol fell on Long Island and New York and Edna crossed Cape Cod and into Maine. Hazel struck inland at the Carolinas and wreaked havoc all the way to Canada.

Hurricanes are believed to have their birth in the warm sea air rising to form clouds. These cause showers causing pressure to drop. As more air rushes in, the rotation of the earth causes a deflection of the air stream and the cyclonic movement begins.

There are many students of the weather who believe that the modern vagaries of hurricanes, long considered to be pure tropical phenomena, are the result of a changing weather pattern including the shrinking polar cap, warmer winters, and probably new overhead air currents. This year the hurricane howling balls have been rolling down the Caribbean alley earlier than usual. Diane seems poised to hit the number three pin in the Carolinas but we can only, calmly albeit, wait.