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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## Some party plans dampen with storm downgrade; others continue full force

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 28, 2011 05:53 PM

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By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

Staying true to their plans for a weather-themed party, Ryan Malone and his six housemates decided to scale back today's festivities after learning the approaching forecast for the system named Irene had been downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm.

"We're kind of let down because it downgraded," the 25-year-old Allston resident said. He and friends were drinking and watching a movie earlier today.

It was a milder, more relaxed celebration than [the crew had hoped for two days ago](#) when the storm, then category 3 hurricane, was barreling across the Atlantic Ocean towards the East Coast.

The scene was similarly calmer than expected at Comm. Ave. Wine and Spirits.

While perhaps some customers had stocked up on liquor in order to hunker down and drink through today's storm, generally, "Last night was a decent night of sales, but nothing extraordinary," said 31-year-old employee Anthony Shroud.

"It's really quiet around here now," he said in a phone conversation early afternoon Sunday, adding of the storm, "It's pretty unremarkable, actually."

Still, the weakened system caused widespread power outages, damage, injuries, and some fatalities along the East Coast and it also caused some area businesses to close, which Shroud said likely was factoring in to his store's slower-than-normal Sunday.

Among the neighborhood's closures were Kelly's Roast Beef, Barley Hall, and Bagel Rising, and in Brighton, El Pelon Taqueria shut their doors due to weather, according to updates on the eateries' social media accounts.

But others rang in Irene's arrive with a party last night and will continue that celebration to close out the weekend. Many businesses and residents up and down the East Coast broadcasted their plans for a hurricane party on Twitter and Facebook.

Around 100 people gathered at Common Ground bar and restaurant Saturday night and into the early morning Sunday for a special storm-themed party where patrons could buy hurricane shots, said manager Bob O'Guin.

To allow for the nighttime wind to howl around inside and set the mood, the spot on Harvard Avenue kept its large front windows open until around 11 a.m.

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spot on Harvard Avenue kept its large front windows open until around 11 a.m., when they are legally required to close them, he said.

“It was good,” said O’Guin. “It was raining outside and the wind was blowing but it wasn’t coming in the [open] windows.”

He said the turnout seemed to be largely residents who live nearby and wanted to enjoy a stormy Saturday night without having to venture too far.

The manager said he expects another hurricane/tropical-storm celebration there tonight will likely have a smaller turnout, because many have to head back to work tomorrow morning. But he was hopeful that residents cooped up most of the day will want to venture out tonight, as the wind and rain subsides.

“A lot of people will just want to get out of their house,” he said. “And, a lot of other places are closed today.”

At White Horse Tavern, an employee said by phone, “we’re just having a normal day. We opened as if nothing happened.”

Tonight, for the bar’s Sunday-night trivia, he said he expects there might be some regular customers who can’t get there because they rely on public transit, which the MBTA suspended this morning. But, he imagines a larger-than-usual crowd of nearby residents will offset those who can’t travel there.

“There’s been a lot of foot traffic from around the neighborhood of people who just wanted to camp out here for a bit,” he said.

Smoken’ Joe’s BBQ in Brighton also plans to host a hurricane party tonight, an employee confirmed by phone Sunday.

The owner there was not immediately available to comment, but a message on the restaurant’s Twitter account read, “Hurricane party ... featuring our signature Hurricane drinks. Cure your cabin fever-spend it with your friends.”

Management at Deep Ellum, which features a phone number with the final four numbers spelling out “beer,” was not immediately available either, but a message on the bar’s website read “We will be open Sunday, August 28th for our normal service hours. We’re not scared.”

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