

THE PRISON OF  
**OBESITY**

IN ACCENT

Najaf talks fail;  
U.S.-Iraqi force set  
to quell militants

STORY, 3A



IN SPORTS  
**PHELPS  
SWIMS  
TO GOLD**

# The Palm Beach Post

Sunday, August 15, 2004

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**CHARLEY'S TOLL: 13 dead 1.3 million without power**

## Cross-state blow may outdo Andrew



Everett Cowan, 91, walks through what's left of Biel's Mobile Home Park in Punta Gorda, where Charley hit hardest. He wasn't hurt and said he isn't moving from his home, which sustained some damage. **Story, 13A**

### 'There's two dead people in my driveway'

*Punta Gorda neighbors struggle with the tragic aftermath of the storm.*

By ALAN GOMEZ  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

PUNTA GORDA — The few dozen families who lived in the Crystal Lake subdivision — a tattered collection of mobile homes and houses surrounding one gator-filled lake — had trouble getting back to their homes after Hurricane Charley's eye passed them by.

Once they made it there, past the downed trees and power lines, over the railroad tracks and under the highway overpass, they had even more trouble finding their homes.

"One, two, three. One, two, three. It's supposed to be right here," said Cindy Vallier, looking for her cousin's house after finding the remnants of her mobile home.

But it wasn't until Cesar Pares started checking on his neighbors that they realized how much they had lost.

He heard some hollering from one of the homes, which had only a bedroom and closet leaning upright.

He dug over mounds of debris, ripped open the closet and found one of his neighbors with a giant gash on his head.

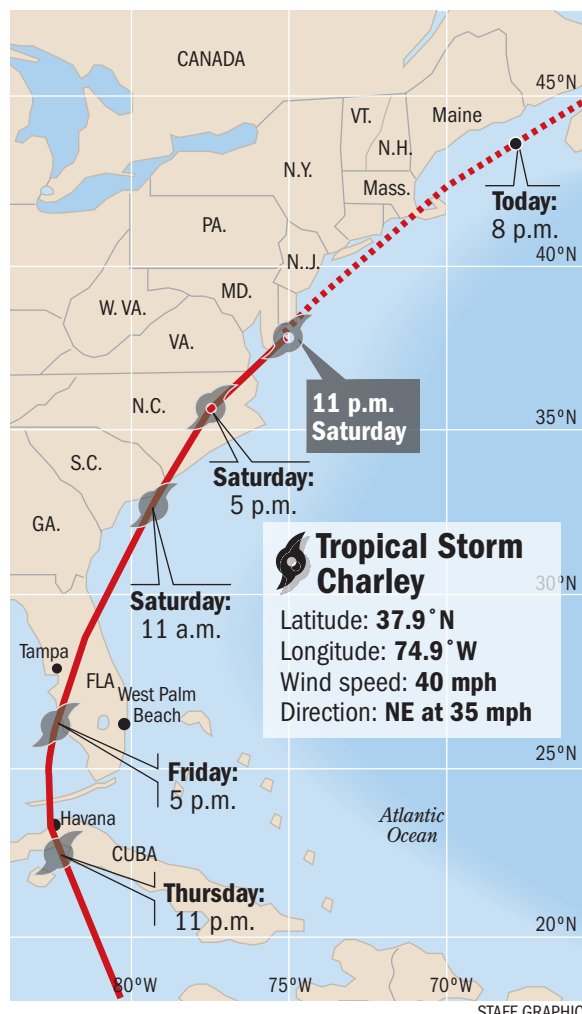
"He was awake. Conscious," Pares said. "He told me, 'I was sitting in my living room when the wind picked me up, through me out the wall, threw me through another wall and into this closet.'"

Bleeding, the man asked about his elderly parents, for whom he had spent a lifetime caring until he left them behind in his living room.

Pares looked back and saw only a concrete slab where the Hawkins' mobile home once stood.

He dug around the street,

See AFTERMATH, 13A ▶



### National Guard, power workers mobilize to help

By ROCHELLE BRENNER,  
BRIAN E. CROWLEY, LINDSAY JONES,  
KIMBERLY MILLER, EVE MODZELEWSKI  
and TIM O'MELIA  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writers

Rescue workers began picking through the twisted metal, splintered furniture and scattered insulation of mobile homes that Hurricane Charley left behind in Charlotte County on Florida's west coast Saturday. They were looking for the injured and the dead.

At least 13 people were confirmed dead and hundreds were still missing after the Category 4 storm unexpectedly veered through Charlotte Harbor Friday, directly over the small town of Punta Gorda, causing widespread devastation in scores of mobile home parks. The death count is nearly certain to rise.

#### Much more online

See more than 100 photos and video of the destruction and track Hurricane Danielle and Tropical Storm Earl.

[PalmBeachPost.com](http://PalmBeachPost.com)

**Election may be postponed**  
Voting is now set for Aug. 31, 5A

**Earl could gain strength**  
It may be hurricane Monday, 15A

The state sent a 25-member mortuary team and county officials parked two refrigerated 18-wheel trucks along the Peace River to serve as mobile morgues.

The storm remained a hurricane Monday, 15A ▶

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**Weather:**  
Afternoon  
thunderstorms.  
High 91,  
low 78.  
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#### Research Post articles

Access stories from 1989 to the present.  
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#### Trojans, Sooners top AP pre-season poll

Media voters rank Seminoles fifth, Hurricanes sixth and Gators 11th. **Sports, 1B**

#### West Palm to study fees for nonprofits

Some officials are wary of, and nonprofits question, a charge for services. **Local, 1C**

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