

Katrina hits Columbus

Despite the 800 miles that separate Columbus from Hurricane Katrina's wrath, North felt the impact

Compiled by
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Early evacuation

Freshman Monica Carrillo sits in the back seat of her family's white minivan with her three little siblings; the same place she's been for the past two days. She and her family left their home in Ocean Springs, Mississippi in preparation for hurricane Katrina.

"We could not get onto [interstate] 10, it was awful."

After traveling the first two hour leg of the journey in six hours, the family was soon running short on gas because "there is no gas in Mississippi" Carrillo said. They finally found gas but were only allowed to buy \$58 worth due to the shortage. This was plenty to get them to the next station.

Nearly two days later, the family arrived at Carrillo's uncle's home in Columbus. Carrillo's aunt's family had also sought refuge in the home, thus putting three families in a single-family home.

Despite all the cramped quarters, Carrillo says she is glad to be in Columbus because "it's pretty nice. It's better than Mississippi [right now]". She also finds her situation rather fortunate.

"I could be somewhere else without a home or probably dead, but I am alive and I have a home." That home is about to change as the Carrillo family plans to return to their Mississippi home within the next week.



◀ Freshman Monica Carrillo stands next to the van in which she and her family of five spent two straight days on the way from Ocean Springs, Mississippi to Columbus.
photo by Brandon Fields

▼ Sophomore Matthew Jenkins holds the cell phone on which he took pictures of hurricane Katrina and on which move to Columbus from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
photo by Mollie Bush



Carrillo's father has already returned to Mississippi to repair a hole in their roof caused by the hurricane.

"I talked to my dad and he said the Mississippi Wal-Mart it smells like dead dogs and all the water is green." Little details like these cause Carrillo a lot of anxiety.

"I'm scared because it's a lot of disease over there now; a lot of dead people, but I have to go because of school and my parents. Though she is fearful, she has hope for the future of the gulf coast area.

"I just hope everything gets better. I wish everyone has a home"

Home again

On the first day of college a freshman's priorities are usually hooking up the TV, making the bed, and finding someone to eat dinner with. For Amanda Halstead (CN '05) the agenda was slightly different. She moved into her Tulane University dorm room in New Orleans at 8:00 a.m., and at 1:00 p.m., the university president informed everyone on campus of a mandatory evacuation. Unable to catch her father, who was already en route to Columbus, Halstead opted

to spend the night sleeping "on a gym floor with six hundred kids" at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

Because she was only allowed to take what fit on her lap, she left most of her clothes and her laptop in her dorm.

After returning home and discovering that Tulane was cancelling its fall semester, Halstead enrolled at IU.

"Being at IU definitely reminds me of the reasons I chose Tulane. I knew that going to school in New Orleans was

going to be a cultural experience as well as an educational one. At the same time, IU has been great. It's a love-hate thing," Halstead said.

Halstead is determined to return to New Orleans next year. "I really want to go back to school there. It doesn't bother me New Orleans is in the current state it's in." Halstead said. "I feel like that's the school I chose and I'm not just going to bail out on that decision."

Weathering the storm

Twenty dollars for three gallons of gas? This price seems unreasonable, but to sophomore Matthew Jenkins' family, desperate to get out of the hurricane-thrashed gulf area, no price was too high.

"My dad was so thankful, he would have paid \$150," Jenkins said.

Unlike most families who either left before the hurricane hit or moved away right after the damage occurred, the Jenkins' family didn't leave their home until other extenuating circumstances arose.

"We went through [hurricane] Andrew. It was pretty bad. We didn't realize it [hurricane Katrina] was going to be so bad." Jenkins said everyone assumed Katrina's path would shift more than it did, like several past hurricanes' have done. Jenkins' family decided to weather the storm.

Jenkins and his father sat on their porch during the hurricane and Jenkins even snapped some pictures.

The Jenkins' home suffered only minor damage: a smashed carport, one broken window, and several downed trees and limbs.

Though Katrina did not hit Jenkins' home town of Baton Rouge as hard as it hit New Orleans, it still felt the effect. Jenkins said that going to the grocery store would often take four hours because of the overwhelming amount of people, and even then most items were in short supply.

"You had to scrounge from on meal to the next," Jenkins said. However, food was not the only sparse commodity.

"My sister is insulin-dependent diabetic and all the hospitals were full." Though Matthew's sister Kaylee never needed to be hospitalized, the family knew that she could at any moment.

The family called several area hospitals to find out if Kaylee could get help if an emergency arose and were told there was absolutely no room anywhere due to all the hurricane-related injuries.

"We didn't know if she'd make it." This uncertainty made it necessary for the family to relocate.

"We had an open house and everything in the house was for sale." Jenkins' family only kept the absolute essentials, and gave any remaining items away.

"I just brought my clothes and one little box of my stuff." They loaded up everything they were keeping and drove to Jenkins' grandmother's home in Columbus. Since their move, the Jenkins' family has purchased a house and plan to permanently call Columbus home.

"I adjusted well. I've already made a couple of friends." Though he is adapting, several loose ends remain in Jenkins' life

Jenkins said he was upset about leaving everything he knew, including friends he has known for more than half his life, and his girlfriend of almost

a year. But, he realizes he is fortunate to have a home.

"Some of my friends in New Orleans don't have a house to go back to... We were the lucky ones"

This realization was aided when one of his friends, Jason, called during the first hour of the storm. Jason told Jenkins that there was already 2 feet of water and people were trapped in their cars. Jason went to the Superdome and on to the Astrodome and made it out safely.

"It was really hard on him. The Superdome was a terrible place to be." Other friends face awful situations as well.

"One of my friends I still haven't talked to. I talked to her about every-other day. We were really good friends and I don't know if she made it out."

Jenkins also feels the loss of a city dear to his heart. He and his friends frequented Bourbon Street and were there a few hours before the hurricane hit.

"It's really weird how one week something is there and the next week it's completely gone"

Jenkins learned a life lesson from his experience: "Whenever you get a warning, you need to take it."

WHERE in the WORLD?



Each of these students comes from a different city, but each has been affected by the same storm. Here's where each student comes from.

Early Evacuation:
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Weathering the Storm:
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Home Again:
New Orleans, Louisiana

photo illustration by Becky Rother

map from yahoo! Travel