

## THE “CHRONICLES OF” FRAZAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY

### - or Hurricane “What’s Her Name” and Her Impact On the Library, Its Staff and Services

*Joe McNeill, System Administrator, Frazar Memorial Library*

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It all began one week in September, 2005. We had just watched what happened to our friends in the New Orleans area as they were literally devastated by one of the worst hurricanes ever experienced. We were able to empathize with many of the victims and evacuees because of the number of students from the New Orleans area who enrolled at McNeese to finish their fall semesters. Others simply asked for library privileges to use our electronic resources or utilize their LALINC borrowing privileges to obtain access to traditional print resources. They all shared with us their stories about evacuating the New Orleans area, and of their frustrations in not being able to return home.

Our local Civic Center was overflowing with evacuees who had nowhere else to go. Burton Coliseum became another place for people to stay, as well as all the local motels and hotels which were almost bursting at the seams. The Lake Charles community reached out to help our friends from the New Orleans area by offering assistance of all kinds in what we thought would be a brief time.

As so often happens during the annual hurricane season, another storm began to brew. This one would soon have a severe impact on the Lake Charles area and the southwest region of the state. Hurricane “What’s Her Name” made landfall on September 23, 2005 at the Texas-Louisiana border. Approximate dates associated with this storm can be seen in the timeline that was published in the most recent issue of Simply Stated.<sup>1</sup>

The Frazar Memorial Library staff had no idea of the impact this storm would have on our library. We began to think that we might have to close for a few days and have a little extra vacation time away from our jobs (a nice long weekend in September).

A little bit of history reveals that September has sometimes been one of the worst months for the hurricane season.<sup>2</sup> Back in 1900, there was a storm in the Gulf of Mexico that destroyed a large part of Galveston Island, and over 5,000 lives were lost.<sup>3</sup> The people of Galveston believed that storms like the one approaching could never have much impact on them except for some rain and a few high winds and that they would survive with minimal damages.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, we felt that Hurricane “What’s Her Name” would have minimal effect on us, especially since the last few storms that called for an evacuation have not affected us very much. We were ready for this one and did evacuate because of the lessons learned from the New Orleans area hurricane just one month before, but we still felt we would only be gone just one or two days.

<sup>1</sup> “Hurricane Rita Timeline.” Simply Stated: Newsletter for the Friends of the Library, McNeese State University. No. 34, Spring, 2006. Editor: Kenneth Awagain. Assistant Editors: David Guillory, Pati Threatt. <<http://library.mcneese.edu/info/friends.htm#rita>>.

<sup>2</sup> Greene, Casey Edward & Kelly, Shelly Henley. Through a Night of Horrors: Voices from the 1900 Galveston Storm. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Bixel, Patricia Bellis & Turner, Elizabeth Hayes. Galveston and the 1900 Storm: Castastrophe and Catalyst. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Lester, Paul. The Great Galveston Disaster. Philadelphia: Standard Publishing Co., 1900.

For a long time Frazar Memorial Library has had a disaster manual in place to cover all types of situations, including hurricanes. This manual has a section detailing what we need to do to prepare for a hurricane. We received word on September 22 that the university would close after Wednesday night classes. Library staff members, except for night staff, were allowed to go home at noon. So we all began to prepare our areas to make them secure. We unplugged computers, moved equipment to more secure areas, covered other equipment and book stacks with plastic, and made sure evening staff would finish securing other areas when the building closed at 10:30. We were certain that we would all be back at work, at the very latest, on Monday and that perhaps even the weekend crews would all be reporting as usual. Night staff consisted of only Graduate Assistants and full time staff did not stay behind to help with closing that evening. This was a big mistake. In retrospect, we really should have met right after we were notified of the decision to close the university. This would have enabled us to have had a more methodical way of securing the building before final closure. At least one full-time staff member needs to stay with the student workers to assist in this process. Closing procedures will be revised in our safety manual as we prepare for the next hurricane season.

On Wednesday evening, parish and city officials issued a “voluntary” evacuation order. Things were looking worse in the Gulf; we might be in the direct path of the storm. Some staff began to leave the area immediately while others waited until Thursday to see what would develop overnight. Our Assistant Archivist returned to the building on Thursday morning and began securing some of the items in the archival storage area most vulnerable to a severe storm. She accomplished this task with little effort because many years ago, as part of our disaster preparedness/safety plan, the most critical archival items had been color coded. This enabled her to know which items needed to be moved from their standard location in a room adjacent to Contraband Bayou to a more secure, interior part of the library.

Thursday morning, around 6:30 a.m., parish and city officials issued the mandatory evacuation order. People from all over our community began the mass exodus away from Lake Charles to safer areas, not knowing how long it would take to reach their destination, or, for that matter, how long they might be gone. My family and I, as well as most of the other evacuees, hoped we would be home by Sunday at the latest, ready to return to work on Monday with little or no effect from the storm. We believed it simply would be another of one of those close calls that had no impact on our lives, our homes, or our community.

One critical item in our safety manual is the “calling list.” This list has phone numbers and addresses for all staff members. When an emergency occurs, a calling procedure is in place, allowing the staff to be informed about when to return to work and ways to help with damage to our building or the campus. As we all prepared to leave on Wednesday, since we felt this was just going to be another one of those close calls, few if any of us remembered to take that manual with us so we could contact our fellow staff members.

While most staff members left town immediately, one staff member stayed behind and evacuated to our building. Because of a bad experience during one of the last evacuations in which he and his family were “stuck” on roadways in Louisiana or Texas, they simply did not want to endure such a hardship again. Instead, they evacuated to Frazar Memorial Library and stayed in one of the meeting rooms on the second floor away from windows and walls that might collapse in the event of a direct hit. Since there was no power, water, or other services available, he and his family later evacuated out of town on one of the buses provided by city and parish officials after the storm had passed.

As the storm moved inland on Friday night and Saturday morning, most of us had evacuated the area in all different directions. We were in Louisiana and in several other states going wherever we could to find shelter for what we hoped would only be a few days. Since the damages were so severe, however, we were not allowed to return until October 8, 2005.

During our evacuation, it became evident that COMMUNICATION was extremely important. We all tried to find each other and make contact in some way either by phone or e-mail. Several of us had cell phones,

but unfortunately we did not know the numbers of other staff members. To counteract this problem, we used e-mail, along with limited cell phone contact. Using this method, the director was able to touch base with all but a few of the staff. These members were not accounted for until after the evacuation orders were lifted.

The McNeese Facilities Department has had a campus-wide disaster plan in place for many years which is reviewed at the beginning of each hurricane season. For the first time in a long while, it was truly put to the test. Certain staff members, including the head of Facilities and his staff, stayed behind to put procedures in motion for reopening the campus. As a part of the plan, unbeknownst to us, our Information Technology Department shut down all the servers on Wednesday night and transported them to Ruston. They had pre-arranged with the Information Technology Department at Louisiana Tech to set up shop there so that the communication lines at McNeese could remain open during the whole ordeal. This was very reassuring to all of us as we found ways to gain access to the Internet in public libraries or access in the homes or shelters to which we had evacuated. Thus we began to share information with each other and also details about the conditions in the Lake Charles area, and in particular, the McNeese campus.

National news about Lake Charles and McNeese was almost non-existent. We had to depend on each other for updated news. The local news station, KPLC-TV, also had frequent updates on their web site. As time progressed, we began to find "blogs" with information that was more current and many of us posted information about our whereabouts so friends and family could locate us.

When we were finally allowed to return to Lake Charles, the next major concern became when and if McNeese would be able to reopen and finish the fall semester. Our president, Dr. Robert D. Hebert, posted a message on our web page in which he affirmed that we would finish the semester and have a fall graduation service for our seniors and graduate students. Many of these students were depending on being able to finish the fall semester. His words were very encouraging and kept our hopes alive about being able to return to work soon.<sup>5</sup>

As plans were made to reopen the university, a general faculty/staff meeting was held on October 26 in which a "state of McNeese" presentation was made by university officials. We were advised that the semester would resume on Thursday, Oct. 27, with only two buildings open for classes. Much confusion was expected. Not all classes would be able to meet yet, but other buildings with classrooms were expected to open soon. The library was NOT one of the buildings scheduled to reopen and it would be quite some time before we were.

Wondering what the library staff could do in a situation like this and how we would be able to continue to serve students with their research needs, we met at the home of Director Nancy Khoury on the afternoon of October 26. Our brief time of fellowship was sweet, for we were thankful to be able to see and visit with each other and know that we were all ok. We then "got down to business" and began discussing possible ways to provide library services for our students, faculty, and other users of the library. The problem was WHERE and HOW. One possible location discussed was the Alumni Center. This seemed to be a good possible location as it had been used earlier as a command center for the university administration. They were able use it to maintain a telephone bank for students to call in for critical information. However, since Farrar Hall was one of the two buildings scheduled to reopen for the first day of classes, we decided to see if we could set up some sort of "reference center" in the Curriculum Materials Center (Education Library) located there.

Farrar Hall was a better location since there were already computers connected to the campus network and a service desk available. Nancy checked with both the Academic Dean and the Director of the Materials Center for approval. She then set up a schedule, initially for just librarians and later, the civil service staff.

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<sup>5</sup> Hebert, Dr. Robert. "Message From the President." Online posting. McNeese State University [HURRICANE RITA UPDATES]. <<http://www.mcneese.edu/rita.htm>>

We made ourselves available to give out PIN numbers and to teach users how to access and use the databases remotely and on campus wherever computer access was available. Reference staff members were able to provide a few BI (bibliographic instruction) classes from this site dealing with electronic resources. We assisted users in setting up accounts for access to NetLibrary electronic books. The cataloging staff began various projects to bar code special collections in the Materials Center. This kept them busy for a period of some six to eight weeks while we were without a library. We also worked with the Performing Arts Library and assisted in getting them ready to reopen. We then proposed a bar coding and inventory project which will eventually enable them to implement the circulation module of Workflows.

After being in the Curriculum Materials Center for about a week, Nancy was able to obtain additional space for us in another building that had finally reopened. There were two vacant rooms formerly used as class rooms in Kaufman Hall available. After receiving the proper permissions, we were allowed to move in. We went back for a “visit” to Frazar Library, under the direction of the Facilities staff, wearing masks and gloves. We were able to retrieve some necessary materials such as a few laptops, one or two desktop computers, tables, chairs, office supplies and a few necessary files. We set up house in the two rooms in Kaufman Hall. One was used as a mail processing room while the other one was an “office” for the staff. Finally, on November 7, all library staff reported back to work to our two-room “library” in Kaufman Hall. We began processing a six-week backlog of mail and set up a small computer “network” using whatever wires and hubs we could connect. By the end of that week we had a small network of about 5 laptops, 3 desktops, and a scanner. (The scanner took a bit longer to get working.) With tables and chairs, there was barely enough space for our 22-person staff to work. This would be our “home” for the next two months.

We adapted as well as possible to our situation and continued to look for ways to keep ourselves occupied. At our “remote location”, we shared tasks that many of us had never done before. We all learned how to use the basic circulation functions of Workflows so that we could check on accounts, give out pin numbers, renew items, check in items, and give reference service when possible. Three phone lines were transferred to this room so that people could reach us. We transferred the reference and circulation desk numbers and one line from the Director’s office. It did not take long for people to discover us and that we indeed were trying to offer some services. The most common daily question asked was “WHEN will you reopen?” We had to tell them we just did not know.

During this time of non-traditional library services, a log and journal was kept of daily staff activities. This enabled us to keep track of the many activities with which we were involved. We hoped that having this record of our activity would give us some sort of history and documentation of what it was like to try and operate a library without a library building. It proved to be invaluable because it allowed us to reflect about what we had been doing. It also enabled us to look for ways to be better prepared for any future disasters our library might experience.

We discovered that although we had a good disaster plan on paper, we had never really put the plans in motion, and that there were indeed some weaknesses we needed to address. One of those was to update our “calling list” to record not only regular phone numbers for staff, but also their e-mail, alternate e-mail, and CELL PHONE NUMBERS. Many of our staff who did not have alternate e-mail addresses or cell phones before the hurricane have now acquired one or both.

Since hurricanes seem to be one of the most common disasters we face in this area, we have realized that we need a better strategy in place before we experience another hurricane season. Several staff members will soon be attending a hurricane preparedness workshop sponsored by SOLINET. After the workshop, we plan to have a safety meeting to review what those staff members learned, and to begin planning for the next season. We are required by the university safety officer to conduct quarterly safety meetings. We can either design our own meeting, with his approval, or complete a web-based one which he posts each quarter for all university employees to complete. We look forward to our meeting in late spring since it will allow us to see

how ready we are for the 2006 hurricane season. At the same time, we will look at any other revisions that might need to be made to our official disaster (safety) manual.

Hurricane “What’s Her Name” caught all of us off-guard. We simply did not think that it would have such an impact on our personal lives or on this library and university. Trying to provide services for our students and faculty as they attempted to complete one of the most difficult semesters ever experienced, without a library for some fourteen weeks, affected us all in so many ways.

We watched in frustration as our library sat for days with no plan to repair the roof or salvage materials. We waited while the university attempted to secure the necessary contracts for remediation on the building in order for us to reopen in a timely manner for the spring semester. It became apparent that we would not be able to reopen at all for the fall semester. We scrounged around to find a place for students to have late night study halls before final exams. Knowing that this had been a long-standing tradition, we were pleased when we were finally able to set up a temporary location.

Finally we saw the remediation work contract awarded. Work was set to begin just after Christmas, on December 27, and would be completed by February 1. We were allowed to move back in to the first floor, but not the rest of the building, on January 18. How exciting that was for all of us! It felt like we were finally home. The only drawback was we did not know when the rest of the building would be available to us. We still had NO elevators available in the newer addition because of asbestos abatement issues. As yet, this problem has still not been resolved. The spring semester had begun, and we began to wonder when, and if, students and faculty would ever be allowed back into the building.

A few days before February 6 (Reopening Day!), we were told that we had been given access to all four floors and that the building was ours again. Remediation had been completed, and it had passed the air quality tests on all four floors. Now we made plans to reopen the building to our library community on Monday, February 6, 2006. This meant that Frazar Library had been closed since 10:30 p.m., September 22, 2005 – a period of more than four months. The main damage suffered was with the documents collection on the fourth floor due to severe roof damage. Lots of water came in from all the rain associated with “What’s Her Name.” We now have over 300 shelves of materials that were emptied by the remediation crews. They filled up box after box with documents sealed in plastic bags. We will have to sort through one box at a time and determine if the documents are fit to be cleaned and re-shelved or if they must be discarded because of mold. A tent has been set up outside the library for our Documents staff members who have already begun the tedious work on this project. While wearing masks and gloves, they open each box and examine the condition of each document.

We have learned a lot from this experience as far as how to be better prepared for a disaster of this magnitude. But even more importantly, we have become much closer as a staff. Because we “lived” together every day in such a confined space for over three months, we shared many common experiences. We were able to see each other, work closely together, and often learned how to do jobs we had never done before. All of us have remarked, since moving back into our Frazar Library “home”, how little we see of each other now. We are so spread out and involved with our daily jobs that we don’t seem to have time to visit with each other anymore.

We were already close as a “family”, but this experience drew us even closer together. We are confident that we would be able to rise above our situation if we ever have to face something like this again. We know that we will be able to continue to serve everyone as we fulfill the mission and purpose of our university which is “Excellence with a Personal Touch”

Below are some pictures from the collection of Kenneth Awagain, editor of our newsletter, of the damages our building suffered.



Kaufman Hall, Room 333,  
Our new "library"



Another view of room 333 in Kaufman Hall,  
our new "library"



Ceiling at the juncture of the first  
and second floors, between  
older building and the addition.



Serials processing area,  
room 334 of Kaufman Hall



Library fourth floor roof after the storm with  
"patch" material covering it.



Debris on roof of library.



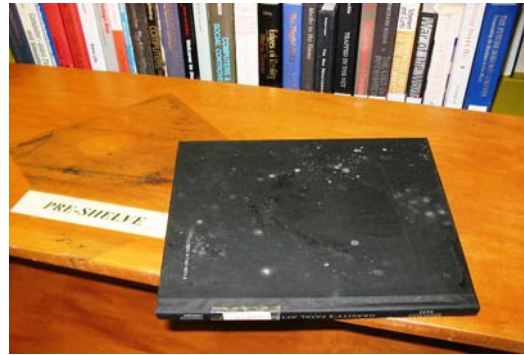
Damages on the fourth floor of library



Third floor water leaks.



Damages to documents on the fourth floor area



Example of mold found on book from the third floor. Full extent of this still not yet determined. Remediators "boxed and sealed" the rest of the items found.



Second floor up to the addition was open and they were getting ready to open the rest of the second floor when this picture was taken. Plastic cover between the two sections was still in place.



After we returned on Jan. 18, this sign was placed in front of the building. Students were allowed to return books to an employee at the front door but but could not enter the building to check out new items.



Damage to fourth floor stack area. Mold is present on items on the shelves. Most items are sticking together as well.



Second floor addition is now reopened. The plastic has come down between the two parts of the building.



Library third floor addition near north wall



Room C which became the temporary mail room after we moved back into Frazar Library and an office area for Documents



Serials area waiting to re-open the second floor addition so the journals in the bins could be shelved in their proper place on the current serials shelving.



Our new mascot, "Frazar Remediator" has become a special friend to all the staff. He will remind us of how we endured the 14 weeks away from Frazar Library and the hope we had that we would return to a place that meant so much to us.

Now that we have returned we are so involved with daily routines we only see everyone when there is a special called meeting of all the staff. We are glad to be back in our offices. But sometimes we miss those days of togetherness. We would like to think that we could adapt to any situation after our experiences of the past year. We hope to be able to do whatever we is needed to provide quality services to the community we serve.

## **NEH Emergency Grant for Hill Library**

The LSU Libraries' Special Collections division received a \$30,000 emergency grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to assist with supplies and expenses incurred in helping archives and libraries with hurricane recovery. See the full story at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/whatsnew.html#katrina>.

## **Fletcher Sustains Minimal Damage**

*Suzanne Martin, Head Librarian, L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College*

L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College in Houma, Louisiana, sustained minimal storm damage from Katrina and Rita. Since our campus is surrounded by numerous trees, we did have lots of limbs and branches that needed to be cleared away before we reopened. There was also very minimal damage to the structure itself.

There were approximately 100 new students who enrolled in classes at Fletcher. Most of the students are from Delgado Community College, but other New Orleans-area schools represented are Charity School of Nursing, Nunez Community College, University of New Orleans and Louisiana Technical College-Slidell Campus. We also have one student from a Mississippi school.

Three instructors from the displaced communities have joined the Fletcher campus during the Fall 2005 semester.

The library was very busy. The computers were in constant use with students accessing information from FEMA, Red Cross, FAFSA, and locating friends and families displaced by the storm. The library has also fulfilled several requests for LALINC cards since Katrina. Our library sponsored a book drive and donating the materials to the evacuees at the Terrebonne Civic Center, in Houma, and Nicholls State University, at Thibodaux.

## **Katrina Spares Loyola**

*Ashley Pillow, J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library*

The J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library at Loyola University New Orleans was fortunate to sustain only minor damage to facilities and materials. Loyola's uptown location spared the campus from the major flooding found throughout so much of the city, and campus police, physical plant personnel, and later several units of the National Guard protected campus facilities. The campus was without power for approximately one month.

Since the storm came up quickly and because we have a relatively new building that has not had major problems in previous storms, we did not do anything special to protect material or data in the library. Following the university disaster recover plan, campus servers were running at a remote site soon after the

storm, so library systems that run on these computers, such as our online catalog system, were not in danger. We realize we were lucky in Katrina and are developing procedures for better protecting our library facilities, including computers and data, in the future.

The university had an emergency preparedness plan in place, and this was used in preparation and response to Katrina. Improvements to the plan, based on situations encountered, are being made now. Likewise, the Monroe Library is reviewing its emergency preparedness plan, and our improvements are a direct result of the challenges we encountered in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita.

Library faculty and staff evacuated to places across the country. Initially, neither campus email addresses nor local phone numbers worked and so communication was very difficult. Library faculty and staff began communicating with each other through a blog the university set up, sharing personal email addresses and new phone numbers. The university's Provost established an interim Academic Affairs office at the University of Houston, and the deans, including the library dean, had several meetings in Houston, where they shared information and made plans. From these meetings and other conversations held via email and phone, the library faculty and staff developed a list of priorities on which to focus.

In addition to the communication difficulties encountered, the biggest challenge for the Monroe Library during the evacuation period was access to information resources. Access to these resources was critical because online courses were offered and many faculty members continued their research. Due to complications with our EZproxy server it was more difficult than expected to restore access, although other campus servers were running at a remote site. The library and its users had password access to those EBSCOhost and some other databases provided through membership in the LOUIS consortium, but did not have regular password access to all other electronic resources to which the library subscribed. It wasn't long before librarians, via email and telephone, began getting requests for access to other resources.

Initially, the process of contacting vendors to request alternative access for our users was driven by which resources were more likely to be needed; later, a more systematic approach was employed. Some vendors preferred that individual scholars register with them, rather than providing institutional password access. Sharing this information with our users presented another challenge: we could not, of course, post passwords to a website, and so we advertised the availability and contact information of librarians able to assist with research on the temporary emergency website. Upon request, the passwords were shared with individuals. We learned a valuable lesson, and as part of our disaster preparedness, we now have a shared spreadsheet with vendors' names, contact information, existing passwords, and alternative access to databases from off-campus without the proxy server. In the event of an extended evacuation, we could gather and disseminate this information sooner.

Another challenge came with our book and periodical vendors. In late August, one of our librarians contacted each vendor to check in, determine our status, and answer any questions. Since it was near the beginning of the fiscal year, we had just placed a large number of orders with both Blackwell's Book Service and Midwest Library Services. After some negotiation it was determined that vendors would track shipments that had already been sent, and all orders were cancelled with the publishers once we realized that we would be gone from the campus for months rather than weeks. Vendors had nowhere to store our ordered materials, and so they would have to be returned to the publishers.

Even after our return to campus was scheduled, restoring service with those vendors was not easy as we were unsure of the status of the campus central receiving department, delivery services to the New Orleans

area, the return of staff in the university's finance department, or the state of the library's budget. It took months to resolve these issues and to begin receiving the books we ordered in August.

For periodicals, our decisions were made somewhat easier by the fact that we had already pre-paid a large deposit on the 2006 renewal of subscriptions. Still, we knew that we would be missing large numbers of undeliverable periodicals during the months of evacuation from the city. EBSCO was unable to change our mailing address to one of their facilities because they also did not have space to store our materials. The United States Postal Service informed publishers that the New Orleans area zip codes could not receive periodical mail. Many publishers put our subscriptions on hold; some kept issues for us, but others did not. When the spring semester started, the current periodical shelves still held only issues received through August. By January, our library and EBSCO determined we were receiving only about twenty percent of our periodicals. EBSCO then offered to change the library's mailing address to their facility in Birmingham and ship periodicals to the library via UPS or DHL once a week. That process started in late February and we will be able to begin claiming in mid-April. EBSCO has been very generous and responsive throughout this process.

Another challenge our library faced was the recovery of materials checked out prior to Katrina. Though many items were lost or damaged in the storm, many materials remained in good condition and had just been forgotten. To remind patrons of materials checked out and encourage prompt return, we sent campus emails, posted signs, and placed a notice on our web site regarding the March 2006 deadline for return of materials. In addition, we contacted patrons via email or telephone with a list of materials checked out. Having a deadline was an important element, and the individual contact also facilitated the process. To date, approximately 57% of items checked out prior to the storm have been recovered.

In planning for the possibility of extended evacuations in the future, the university is addressing the challenge of continuing to provide classes to a scattered student body by an equally scattered teaching faculty. The Monroe Library is supporting the university in this by training teaching faculty in the CADE method of online course design. CADE, Competency Assessment in Distributed Education, was developed by JesuitNET, the Jesuit Distance Education Network, to support the Ignatian values of education in an online environment. By the end of the spring semester, approximately fifty teaching faculty will have received training in the CADE method.

The library is also exploring options to assist with the continuation of services in the event of an extended evacuation. These include creating a Blackboard course for library employees to facilitate communication and the sharing of sensitive information, providing flash drives on which employees can store and carry files and projects, and exploring the option of migrating from desktop computers to laptops.

In the aftermath of Katrina, staff of the Monroe Library made the best decisions possible with the information available at the time. The experience taught us a lot, and we will certainly prepare for possible extended evacuations in the future based on this experience.

## **Tulane Sustains Major Hurricane Damage**

*Cecilia D. Stafford, Associate Dean for Library Services, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library*

The Tulane University Libraries sustained substantial damage to collections and buildings as a result of flooding from Hurricane Katrina.

The most heavily damaged building was the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library on the uptown campus. The basement was ravaged by approximately eight feet of floodwater. The music library and very large collections of government documents, newspapers, and microforms were housed in the basement. The building's mechanical components including electrical and telephone wiring and the HVAC system were also housed in the basement.

Fortunately, as a part of its campus-wide emergency plan, Tulane employed Belfor, an international disaster management company to assist in a large-scale salvage project. Within days of the flood, Belfor arrived on campus and pumped water out of the basement and installed large generators and enormous tubes to pump dry air throughout the building. Due to this quick and professional response, mold did not occur in the collections on the upper four floors of the library.

Materials salvaged from the basement include about 70 percent of the printed books, journals, and scores from the music library. Also salvaged were about 10,000 items from a cataloging arrearage and some



Music collection

closed-stack art books--as well as about ten percent of the government documents collection and less than five percent of the microforms collection. Lost to the floodwaters were the portions of the printed music and government documents collections not salvaged, including perhaps as many as 150,000 titles in government documents alone. Some titles were not cataloged and data are unavailable for actual numbers of lost volumes or lost items that might have been multiple copies of the same title edition. All sound recordings and media collections housed in the music library were lost. In the microforms area all materials on microfiche and micro card were lost and in microfilm format only Louisiana newspapers and a number of Latin American materials on microfilm could be salvaged.

The library's Special Collections, housed in Joseph Merrick Jones Hall across the street from the Howard-Tilton building, had approximately four feet of water in the basement. Rescued from the floodwaters in Jones Hall were more than 4,000 boxes of special collections materials including manuscripts with personal papers of several local figures and the records of a local bank.

All of the salvaged materials were freeze-dried and shipped in refrigerated trucks to Belfor facilities in Forth Worth, TX and Memphis, TN for restoration. At this time, it is unknown how much of the material can be restored, but samples of materials received from the restoration facility have looked extremely promising.

Collections in both of these buildings have been accessible throughout the Spring 2006 semester. The Special Collections were reopened to staff in mid-December 2005 and to the public in early January. The Howard-Tilton Memorial Library building was reopened to staff on January 2 and to the public on January 9, 2006. For the next one to one and a half years, power to the building will be supplied through temporary power generators and the HVAC system will consist of large air tubes snaked throughout the building from large generator units located at the rear of the building.

The Nadine Vorhoff Women's Center Library sustained water damage to a portion of library and archival collections. The damaged materials also have been sent to Belfor and freeze-dried to stabilize their condition. They are now awaiting restoration at the Belfor facility.

The Tulane Law School Library received little damage due to Katrina, but due to the hot and humid conditions in the building during the fall, mold was found in some small pockets of materials on the sixth floor of the building. The library reopened to staff and users in mid-December.

Two of the libraries located on the uptown campus sustained no damage. The Turchin Business Library and the Architecture Library survived the storm intact, as did the new off-site storage depository located on South Jefferson Davis Parkway near Interstate 10. Flood water stopped about one inch short of entering the off-site facility which houses approximately 325,000 older volumes from the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library collection, a large collection of older Latin American newspapers, a substantial number of items from the Special Collections areas including manuscripts and building plans from the Southeast Architectural Archive. Also sharing storage and workspace in the off-site facility are the Newcomb Art Gallery and the Amistad Research Center.

Due to severe damage to many buildings on the health sciences center in downtown New Orleans, the Rudolph Matas Medical Library was temporarily relocated to another health sciences center building. The staff was able to return to the medical library facility in January and have been open to health sciences center personnel and students during the spring semester of 2006. The medical students and faculty remained on the campus of Baylor University throughout the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. Library patrons still have to request stack materials via email and telephone as the stack area is still under construction.

## **Dupré Changes Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

*Betsy Miguez, Publicity Chair, Dupré Library*

At Dupré Library, UL Lafayette, the immediate result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was an influx of over 700 students, mostly from New Orleans colleges and universities. These students came to the library asking questions about where to find services on campus and how to use the library's resources. The library extended borrowing privileges to displaced faculty from the University of New Orleans and to all McNeese University faculty, staff, and students.

Nick Spitzer, UNO professor and producer of the NPR program American Routes, moved into an office in Dupré Library and made extensive use of the library's Cajun and Creole Music Collection. He broadcast his radio program from KRVS radio station on the UL Lafayette campus until he returned to New Orleans at the end of January.

As a direct result of the hurricanes, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette experienced a \$2.5 million budget cut. The library budget was reduced by 30 percent. All standing orders were placed on hold. Only about \$12,000 was spent this year on monographs. Those purchases were made for departments which were going through the accreditation process. To participate in a campus-wide effort to save utilities, Dupré Library shortened its hours this spring. Employees are working longer days with shorter lunch hours Monday through Thursday and are working only half-days on Friday to complete the 40-hour work week. All computers, printers, and monitors are now shut down at the end of each work day.

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Dupré Library at UL Lafayette shortened its hours to participate in a campus-wide effort to save utilities. The library was open 7:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Monday through

Thursday; 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Friday; 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on Saturday; and 2:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. on Sunday. All computers, printers and monitors were shut down at the end of each work day. Employees worked longer days with shorter lunch hours Monday through Thursday to complete the 40-hour work week.

Dupré Library has had a disaster plan since the 1980s. After the two hurricanes of 2005, Library Director Dr. Charles Triche formed an ad-hoc committee to update the disaster plan and bring it into compliance with campus-wide hurricane preparedness planning. The campus plan is organized by Phase 1 and Phase 2 preparations, which roughly correspond with hurricane watch and hurricane warning notices. The updated library plan identifies activities which employees should undertake in each phase of disaster preparedness to protect the library's collection and equipment. A Disaster Response Team has been formed to respond to disasters when they occur. That committee is in the process of gathering supplies needed to aid in disaster response.

## **Personal and Professional Reflections Post Katrina and Rita**

*Mitch Fontenot, Assistant Librarian, LSU Libraries*

In the wake of last year's devastating hurricanes, there has been some time for reflection on what we could (and could not) have done better. These devastating events marked a time in Louisiana history that will not be forgotten, and give us now an opportunity for self-reflection, rebuilding, and what we need to do in order to be better prepared for the future.

On a personal level, a colleague and I went directly to Louisiana State University's Maddox Field House to assist with evacuees. The first day was a bit unorganized considering the magnitude and severity of the situation. We spent the bulk of the day folding donated clothes, organizing them by size and type, and distributing them. We found the job by looking around where help was needed, and were grateful to do so. The remaining days were better organized, with volunteers being organized in the stands and called out to specific needs and duties as needed and where most appropriate.

On the professional level, Louisiana State University (and, of course, its libraries) saw an influx of over 3,000 students and many members of the public. How we did reference and accommodated their needs changed how we answered questions during that time period. Printing was a major obstacle that had to be accommodated since we are a cashless printing entity and cards (student id or guest visitor) have to be obtained in order to print. Reasonable free printing (small print jobs) was offered and everyone pitched in sometimes usually their own cards to assist evacuees who had no money. We experienced a surge in public patrons as opposed to students that also had to be accommodated. Forms from FEMA were printed as well as the websites (posted on our website) to access these forms. Some patrons had to be shown how to use the computers having had no experience. Websites of interest and importance were placed on our main webpage.

How could we have done things better? A disaster plan in the wake of such a catastrophe is a necessity. A phone down list or call down list or phone log of people initiating a phone call and going down the line would be extremely helpful in order to make sure that all staff are all accounted. Simple guide sheets detailing how to use our computers and printers would enable those users who need training on the use of such things would also bode well for us in a time of extreme need. Training sessions and/or town hall meetings on what to do in the event of such emergencies for all staff may alleviate fear and misunderstandings as to roles staff are to take in the event of catastrophes.

We hope that such an event never happens again. In reality, the best way to deal with such an event is preparedness. An all staff meeting once or twice a year to discuss what each person's role in such an emergency should be is paramount. Emergency procedures for such events should be in writing and posted on the library's website. Appropriate necessary forms, websites, addresses, and phone numbers should be collected and made available immediately. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were events in the United States and especially Louisiana that no one can ever fully prepare for, but hopefully we can learn from these events and be better prepared in the event that such a thing ever happens again.

## **MayDay -- A Call to Action**

*Elaine B. Smyth, Curator of Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library*

Protecting our collections is one of our fundamental responsibilities as librarians, but few institutions have disaster plans that are current and well understood by staff. This year and every year, do something to improve your institution's emergency preparedness. Do something personal -- read a key document (your disaster plan, if you have one!), check your collections to make sure nothing is stored on the floor, review the location of fire extinguishers. Make it organizational: have an evacuation drill, update your institution's contact information, have a group review of your emergency plan. Make MayDay a day to remember and act to preserve our collections.

## **Call for ACRL/LA Archival Material**

*Kathie Bordelon, Archivist/Special Collections Librarian, McNeese State University Library*

The Archives Department at the McNeese State University Library houses the archives of ACRL/LA. Kathie Bordelon, chair of the Archives Committee, would like for this collection to better represent the activities and functions of the chapter. The committee would also like the collection to be more up-to-date. To this end, we are requesting that all current and past officers and members who have material that should be preserved send it to McNeese.

The officers of ACRL/LA create archival records for the organization during their tenure in office. Examples of materials include, but are not limited to: correspondence, minutes, membership lists, papers presented at meetings, conference programs, and newsletters. When these records are no longer needed for the day-to-day course of business they are classified as noncurrent records and should be transferred to the ACRL/LA Archives. Here they will be preserved and made available whenever needed for any historical or operational purpose.

Former officers are asked to check their office filing cabinets, storage rooms, garages, attics, closets, under beds, etc. wherever the records may have been stashed and transfer these to the ACRL/LA Archives housed at the McNeese Library. Current officers are asked to be aware of the need for their records to be transferred when they are no longer needed.

Contact Kevin Merriman ([kmerriman@mcneese.edu](mailto:kmerriman@mcneese.edu)), Kathie Bordelon ([bordelon@mcneese.edu](mailto:bordelon@mcneese.edu)), or Pati Threatt ([pthreatt@mcneese.edu](mailto:pthreatt@mcneese.edu)) to arrange the transfer or if you have any questions.

## President's Message

### Bigger Words May be Needed

*Kevin Hastings-Merriman, President, ACRL Louisiana*

I imagine that many of us go back and forth between being tired of hearing about the hurricanes and being so in awe of their impact that we cannot help but retell our story, with appropriate updates. Sensitive to the impact of language, we are not “victims” but “survivors.”

For me, homelessness is becoming a memory—the time living on a Navy ship, the time staying with family or friends, and the endless uncertainty—all trying, but manageable...survivable. While our damaged library was closed, professional “homelessness” was almost just as insufferable for my colleagues and me. The routines of work often offer respite when one’s home life is a bit unsteady. But, again, we were able to muddle through, with mutual support, good humor, and remarkable tolerance considering how many people were housed in our one-room makeshift library command center. We did it. We survived.

I recently had the privilege of sitting on a board of presenters at the annual LLA conference, speaking to the topic *Whirlwinds in Libraries*. I thought I had seen all the photos, a good bit of the devastation, and more than enough flattened buildings. I thought I had a good feel for the damage that had been done. I was wrong. There are still people without homes, without libraries, and without jobs; and suddenly “survivor” seems inappropriate for people still struggling. “Survivor” suggests past tense, that the struggle is over, that you have survived. It could be argued that one “survived” the hurricane and is now “rebuilding” or “recovering.” But, those of you who continue daily to face the results of those storms, you are survivors, you are surviving, and you will survive, though I wish there were a bigger word for where you are now. I hope the stories and articles in this edition offer comfort to those struggling and insight to those who had the privilege of observing or are slowly getting back to a new definition of normal.



## Who? What? Where?

### at LSU

**Gina Costello** has joined the faculty of the LSU Libraries as the new Digital Services Librarian for Special Collections. Hans Rasmussen will join the faculty of the LSU Libraries as Special Collections Cataloger on June 1.

"A Short History of Prints: A Selection of Historical Works of Graphic Art" is on display in Hill Memorial Library through September 1. Celebrating the visual and historical richness of the graphic arts over the centuries, the exhibition was curated by students enrolled during the Spring 2006 Semester in Art 4401, "The History of Prints," working in collaboration with Special Collections staff. It features a cross-section of interesting examples of historical prints from the Renaissance to the present day, ranging from contemporaries of Albrecht Durer to Picasso, Matisse, and Jim Dine.

Recent acquisitions for the LSU Libraries' Special Collections division include the diaries (1876-1932) of Avoyelles Parish farmer Leonce P. Bordelon; family papers (ca. 1850-2000) of the Gay and Plater families, planters and politicians of Louisiana, as well as the Plater family's plantation library; papers and photographs (ca. 1940-1999) from Gladys Clark, master Acadian textile weaver; the Civil War diary of John Ellis, kept while a prisoner of war; and records (1980s-2001) of the grassroots advocacy group Louisiana Health Care Campaign. The records of 20th-century sugar plantation Acadia Plantation (Thibodaux, La.), are also now open for research.

### at ULL

**Jean Kiesel**, Louisiana Room Librarian was awarded a grant from the American Library Association's Public Programs Office and Nextbook to conduct a reading and discussion series "Let's Talk About It: Jewish Literature" in partnership with Lafayette Public Library during Fall 2005. A second grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities allowed the libraries to purchase copies of the five selected books for participants to use. Copies of those titles are now available for distribution to public libraries around the state.

**Sheryl Curry**, Head of Internet Access Services; **Ashley Bonnette**, BI/Distance Learning Librarian; and **Helen Thompson**, UL Lafayette English Department, recently received a \$15,500 student technology grant to acquire RefWorks, a web-based bibliographic management service distributed by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA). RefWorks enables direct import of search results from many of Dupré Library's databases into an individual account created by the user. The program automatically creates correctly formatted bibliographies in all major styles, and it supports document or manuscript preparation in MS Word. The grant also funded the affiliated RefShare application, which enables users working on a group project to post and access information on a central Web page.

**Danny Gillane**, Development and Gifts Librarian, and **Betsy Miguez**, General Reference Librarian, collaborated with **Dr. Jean T. Kreamer** and **Dave Spizale** of KRVS radio station on an audio-visual PowerPoint presentation explaining the mural "The History of Medicine in Louisiana." The mural is mounted on the first floor of Dupré Library.

**Denise Goetting**, Head of Cataloging, and **Betsy Miguez**, presented papers concerning changing perspectives of females in children's literature at the Midwest Popular Culture Association's Annual Conference in St. Louis, MO, and the Midwest Modern Language Association's Annual Conference in Milwaukee, WI, in October and November, 2005.

**Betsy Miguez** is serving a two-year appointment to RUSA's Reference Sources Committee. The committee met in San Antonio during ALA's Midwinter Meeting in January, 2006, to select the Outstanding Reference Sources published in 2005.

**Dr. Bruce Turner**, Head of Special Collections, collaborated with two other archivists, **Dr. Florent Hardy** and **Dr. Deborah J. Clifton**, on an article entitled "Les Archives des Francophones de la Louisiane" which was published in *Archives*, volume 36, issue 2 (2004-2005). The journal is published by Association des Archivistes du Que'bec.

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## Renew today!

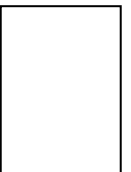
Our membership year begins in July. It's time for everyone to renew! For more information and to renew, see our website:  
[www.mcneese.edu/library/acrl/membership\\_form.htm](http://www.mcneese.edu/library/acrl/membership_form.htm).

Thanks!

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Mike Russo  
LSU Libraries  
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