

Floods

by **CECILE DIXON**
Special to The Tribune

Late August 2005, I was in New Orleans, spending my days sitting at Café Du Monde eavesdropping as tourist described the city and writing in my journal. In the humid evenings, I'd visit my favorite restaurants and walk the streets in and out of bars listening to music. Life was good. I began to hear news stories about a hurricane that was headed toward Louisiana. Newscasters were their usual excited selves, but the locals, they laughed it off. The city had survived many hurricanes without much more than a hiccup. They were the true experts. I brushed off my worries and enjoyed my time in my favorite city. On August twenty third, I boarded my flight home. The weathermen had gotten louder. In the taxi to

the airport, I'd noticed that a few homeowners were boarding up their windows.

Once at home I didn't think much about the hurricane, out of sight, out of mind. Each time I watched the national news there were reports of the hurricane that I now knew as Katrina.

On August twenty ninth the news was horrific. The waters breached the levees and the city was flooded. Each day the news became grimmer. News footage showed people on rooftops begging to be rescued. Bodies floated in the muddy, water. People that could, got themselves to the Astrodome. They waited to be rescued. They waited and waited. No rescue came. Mayor Ray Nagin begged for help on national TV.

Charity Hospital was flooded, its generators were in the basement. A

hospital with no power and with patients too ill to move. As a nurse I knew what I had to do. I got in my car and headed back to New Orleans. I could help, as a nurse/medic I was trained for this.

As I drove I tried repeatedly to phone a friend who was in New Orleans with the Red Cross. Finally, the call connected. When I told him I was on my way he said, "Go back. If you come you'll become one more person to take care of."

I didn't go any further. I got a room and a bottle of whiskey somewhere in the middle of Tennessee. For the next four days, I drank whiskey and watched CNN coverage of New Orleans. I finally realized my depression and forced myself away from the television and drove back home.

Today, March 2, 2021, I watch drone footage of the county that I live in, the county where I was born. In the midst of the pandemic during February we had a winter storm with snow, sleet and freez-

ing rain. When the weather warmed the ground became saturated with the melting snow and ice. Then came days of rain. For twenty-four hours it rained solid, mostly hard enough to sound like hammers beating on the roof. The water had nowhere to go. It ran off the wet, clay soil into the creeks. The river began to rise.

The banks of the waterways of Estill County overflowed. Roads were impassable. The little town of Irvine was cut off from the rest of the world. My fan shaped farm is bordered by water. I watched as the water expanded over the bottoms and fields. At first I wasn't too concerned. Flooding occurs on a regular basis. But this time the water didn't stop. Lakes covered fields. My granddaughter's house sits on the bottom a few hundred yards from the river. The water crept up to the back of the house that is home to my granddaughter, her husband and three little boys.

I watched Face Book videos of the flooding. I

became obsessed. At first the videos were of flooded roads and businesses. Then they began to show houses. I saw the homes of friends and family, destroyed by water. Sometimes the only things visible were the roofs. I cried for all the people who I knew were too poor to rebuild. I ached at the loss of all the irreplaceable things. Visions of floodwaters once again weighed on my heart.

The evening that the floodwaters crested was sunny. Although the yard was muddy, my granddaughter let her little boys out to play. As they played in their front yard, flood waters lapped at the back of their house. A car drove slowly down the road. Two women snapped pictures of my muddy little grandsons in front of the floodwaters. My granddaughter yelled at them to stop. They didn't stop.

When she told me about the incident I understood her frustration. She didn't want images of her children to become flood porn. "Here lies Vera*" the

saddest flood porn of all time. I had to stop watching the videos and document the flood of 2021.

Until this moment the floods of my hometown had just been marks and a date on the main bridge's pylons. Now it's faces of people. It's heroes carrying people out of flooded trailers. It's nurses that ride a johnboat to get to the hospital to care for their patients. It's the police and fire officers who haven't been home for days because they are monitoring flooded roads and rescuing stranded drivers. It's the church ladies and the school cafeteria ladies feeding anyone who needs to eat. Let's document these faces in photos. The goodness and strength that rose from the muddy water is much more important than the water. At the writing of this there have been no deaths in Estill County attributed to the flood.

* <https://www.foxnews.com/us/here-lies-vera-womans-death-still-haunts-new-orleans-neighborhood-a-decade-after-katrina>

Flood victims should beware of scams

from **ERIC BAKER**
Estill County Extension Service

In the wake of natural disasters such as floods, there is often a rise in scams targeting those most affected. UK Extension specialists for Family Finance and Resource Management remind us that scammers strike when vulnerability is high. If flooding has affected you or a loved one, learn how to identify and prevent four types of scams common to flood victims.

Home improvement scams. Home improvement scammers may knock on your door when they see a need or an opportunity. This is a "pay for something you never receive" scam. Scammers will take a deposit, but never return to do the work. Before hiring someone to make repairs to your home or property, ask questions. Ask to see customer referrals, proper identification, and a contractor's license. Also be cautious of service providers who raise prices during a crisis. If you believe price gouging has occurred, contact the Kentucky Attorney General: <https://www.ag.ky.gov/pricegouging>.

Charity scams. After widespread devastation, many consumers want to help by donating. Knowing this, scammers prey on generosity and compassion. Before donating to an unknown charity,

the Better Business Bureau (BBB) urges donors to visit <https://www.give.org>. This website will tell you if you can trust the charitable organization. Also, be careful of crowdfunding scams. These happen when a person asks for help online through a crowdfunding website like Kickstarter, Fundly, or GoFundMe. Some crowdfunding sites do little to verify that the money goes where the organizer says it will, so exercise caution before giving.

Insurance scams. Flood victims are likely to have filed an insurance claim for disaster-related damages. If you are contacted by phone, email, or in person about an insurance claim or policy, always check that the representative is who they say they are. Call your insurance company or policy provider directly. Use the number on your account statement to make the call. Do this before disclosing any personal information or making any payments. Similarly, be wary of contractors who offer to waive insurance deductibles or offer discounted rates.

FEMA scams. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides help after disasters such as flooding. Scammers may pose as FEMA employees offering to help complete paperwork or conduct home inspections. Ask

to see an ID badge. FEMA employees are required by law to present a laminated photo ID. They will never charge for disaster assistance, application support, or inspections. You also can contact FEMA directly at 800-621-3362 to verify a representative's identity. If you have not applied for FEMA assistance, do not accept phone calls or visits from someone claiming to be a FEMA or other government representative.

To prevent flood-related SCAMS, follow these steps:

- Stop before giving out any personal or financial information.
- Check the validity of the company, representative, claim, or charity.
- Act cautiously before signing paperwork. Don't sign if you don't fully understand.
- Make informed decisions and seek trusted advice.
- Slow down. Never let someone pressure you to act quickly or out of fear.

References
BBB. (Aug. 27, 2020). Charitable giving after a natural disaster or tragedy. <https://www.bbb.org/givingaftertragedy>
FEMA. (June 18, 2020). Disaster Fraud. <https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/security/disaster-fraud>
Federal Communications Commission. (Sept. 18, 2020). After storms, watch out for scams. <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/after-storms-watch-out-scams>
Sources: Nichole Huff, UK Extension Specialist for Family Finance and Resource Management, and Kelly May, Senior UK Extension Associate for Family Finance and Resource Management

Kentucky Legislature

Continued from Page 4

U.S. Senators. Senate Bill 228 would change the way vacancies are filled for a U.S. senator from Kentucky. The bill would require the governor to select a replacement from a list of three nominees selected by the state party of the departing senator. It would also specify how long a replacement can serve before an election is held for the seat. Senate Bill 228 passed the Senate 28-8 and will go to the House for consideration.

Unemployment insurance. Senate Bill 7 would allow the state to waive unemployment insurance overpayment debts that occurred between Jan. 27 and Dec. 31 of last year if the overpayment was not the fault of the recipient and if requiring repayment would be "contrary to equity and good conscience," according to the legislation. After being approved by the Senate 35-0 late last month, the bill passed the House 94-0 this week. The legislation now goes to the governor to be signed.

Six legislative days remain in this year's legislative session. The Senate and House are scheduled to convene on March 11, 12, 15, 16, 29 and 30.

If you'd like to share comments on the issues under consideration with state lawmakers, please call the General Assembly's toll-free Message Line at 800-372-7181.



"Stop complaining! If you hadn't married me you'd still be working in that laundry!"

Hospital Reschedules Ladies' Healthy Heart Couch Conversation

Mercy Health - Marcum and Wallace Hospital has rescheduled its virtual educational event titled, "Ladies' Healthy Heart Couch Conversation" for Thursday, March 18th at 12:00 Noon. via Zoom with Dr. Paula Hollingsworth, Cardiologist, Baptist Health Lexington.

According to the American Heart Association, heart disease is the number one killer of women; that's approximately one woman every minute. Ninety percent of women have one or more risk factors for de-

veloping heart disease. "It's important for women to be educated about heart disease," said Dr. Paula Hollingsworth. "The symptoms of a heart attack and heart disease can be different in women versus men and are often misunderstood. It's also important to know how your numbers impact heart health."

Please call 606-726-8185 to register for this free event and receive your Zoom invitation/virtual event information. All attendees will be entered in a gift basket drawing.

UK COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
University of Kentucky - College of Agriculture

Estill County
Family & Consumer Sciences
Estill County Extension Office

Thursday, March 11 at 11:00am or 7:00pm
Big Blue Book Club is Back

The Big Blue Book Club is off to a great start! We invite returning book club members and new members alike to participate in our second series that began February 25. Our second book is *Flipping a Switch: Your Guide to Happiness and Financial Security in Later Life* by Barbara O'Neill, PhD, CFP. Not only will you have the opportunity to read the book, but as a bonus, Dr. O'Neill will be the Book Club Host for this series. You may participate in a day session or evening session, which will be held on March 11 at 11:00 a.m. or 7:00 p.m. (The morning and evening sessions will be the same each week.) We have a limited number of books available.

Equal Opportunity Service Provider

Sammy's Furniture
722 Main Street, Ravenna • 723-6562
Open MON-FRI 9-6 and SATURDAY 9-5

- Tables & Chairs (We do special orders!)
- New Mattresses and Box Springs
- New Bedroom Suites
- New Living Room Suites
- New Recliners & Lift Chairs

NO CREDIT? BAD CREDIT? NO PROBLEM!
EASY FINANCING BY
MERCHANTSPREFERRED
LEASE PURCHASE SERVICES

Free Delivery & Set Up