

EDITOR'S NOTE: There may be a few more misspellings and proofreading mistakes than usual in this issue of The Post. I apologize and beg your indulgence. As we go to press, my wife and publishing partner, Karen Phillips, has been sent by the Red Cross and the American Psychological Association to the Gulf States, there to provide mental health treatment for victims and refugees of Hurricane Katrina. Karen's language skills and sharp eye catch most of my mistakes in this publication. But her skills as a clinical psychologist are needed more right now, in Alabama and Mississippi.

— Terry Smith

People Of The North Bay Show Their Support

The outpouring of support for the victims of Hurricane Katrina is heart-warming to see. Despite the controversies raging about the response by governmental agencies and major disaster relief organizations, the response from corporations (Wal-Mart and the NFL to name just two), non-profits, and individuals has been extraordinary. Volunteers are going to the effected area from all over the country. It's clear that the people of our nation have their hearts in the right place.

Nowhere is that more obvious than in North Bay. The people of Sonoma and West Marin counties have always been known for their willingness to come forward when neighbors are in need. Now it's clear that we are equally willing to help even if those neighbors live thousands of miles away.

There's no way, in the space we have here, to recognize all the individuals and organizations who have lent support to relief efforts in the Gulf states, but here a just a few examples:

Retailers all across the Post distribution area are holding special events, donating a portion of their profits, or acting as collection points for donations. Many of Petaluma's downtown merchants, for instance, donated from 10% to 50% of their receipts on Saturday, September 17th, to Katrina relief. A number of their landlords contributed as well. Also, the Petaluma City Council agreed to donate to

the cause.

Most area schools and students are holding fund-raisers, from the elementary (like Tomales Elementary School) to the high school and college level. (See the separate article on this page detailing the program by Sonoma State University and the CSU system to accept displaced students.) Recently, local high school girls sold baked goods in front of Petaluma Market to contribute to disaster efforts. As always, area religious and service organizations are playing a major role in raising funds.

The Red Cross is deploying hundreds of North Bay volunteers to the Gulf Coast. Among them is the co-editor/publisher of *The Petaluma Post*. Wine columnist Von Hurson is working with the Red Cross in Santa Rosa, helping volunteers prepare for their deployment and training them in first aid techniques.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Katrina homeless are coming to the North Bay, where food and housing are being made available. Besides people, pets and farm animals are being relocated from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

The relief effort, in both dollars and hard work, may never match the staggering cost of the damage Hurricane Katrina caused, but it is certainly appreciated. It is testimony, too, that people of widely differing backgrounds can work together and care about each other. That's something we need proof of more often.

COVER STORIES

First Wave Of Red Cross Volunteers Return

With lingering news of all the things that went wrong in Katrina's relief efforts, there are things that went right. Red Cross volunteers have begun to trickle home, tired but also energized from their experiences. Returning volunteers are being debriefed at the local Red Cross chapters in Santa Rosa and throughout northern California, and the stories they're bringing back are filled with poignancy, the inevitable moments of joy and even occasional humor

Most returning volunteers are people with regular jobs and families who gave up their vacations, took time off of work and left family and friends for weeks, all to be a part of the effort to help people who were affected by the hurricane. They have ended up making a huge difference in the lives of many trauma-

tized people. The volunteers worked 12- to 15-hour days to feed, shelter, and otherwise offer comfort and emotional support to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Volunteers with medical and mental health training have been deployed as well.

896 shelters and evacuation centers, plus nearly 44,000 rooms have been provided to accommodate storm victims. 92,696 volunteer workers -- 26,000 from California and Hawaii -- have been distributing meals, snacks, water, clean-up and comfort kits. More are being deployed every day.

In addition, Katrina victims are now arriving in the North Bay on a regular basis. "We don't know yet how many from the Gulf Coast hurricane region will be coming to Sonoma County," said Tim Miller, CEO of the local Red Cross. "In the

course of our planning to be prepared to handle a disaster in Sonoma County, we've always made plans in advance to provide comfort, food and emotional support for disaster victims in our area."

All disaster assistance is made possible by voluntary donations of time and money. Donations can be made at sonomacounty.redcross.org, via mail to American Red Cross-Sonoma County Chapter, 5297 Aero Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, or by phone at 707.577.7619 or 1.800.HELP.NOW.

In addition, Sonoma National Bank has designated their Sonoma County branch locations as donation sites for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Donations may be made at any of Sonoma National Bank's eight county branches.

SSU and CSU Aid Students Affected By Hurricane Katrina

To assist college students displaced by Hurricane Katrina, Sonoma State University and seven other California State University campuses will immediately admit students from Gulf Coast area colleges, as well as California students who had planned to attend a college in the affected region.

CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed said "We will do what we can, as fast as we can, to help out these students and their families."

In addition to Sonoma State, the seven other participating CSU campuses are Bakersfield, Chico, Dominguez Hills, East Bay, Humboldt, Los Angeles, and Sacramento.

Students from the Gulf Areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, even those who lack proper academic documents, may be admitted conditionally for Fall 2005.

Their enrollment status for subsequent terms will depend upon the as-yet-unknown ability of schools, colleges, and universities in the Gulf region to provide transcripts and other documentation.

CSU campuses will temporarily suspend policies regarding the requirement to document completion of A-G requirements for first-time freshmen and transfer students and waive the normal English and mathematics placement test requirements for students impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

Students who are residents of the Katrina-affected areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama will be exempt from payment of non-resident tuition. They will still be billed for the CSU State University Fee, all campus fees, housing fees, and other appropriate fees required of enrolled stu-

dents. However, campuses will provide flexible deferred payment plans and account receivables as appropriate.

Campuses providing access to students from the Katrina-affected areas will either provide on-campus housing or assist in securing housing off-campus.

CSU is exploring the possibility of special conditions on the federal financial aid regulations for students unable to attend college in the Gulf States. In the meantime, CSU campuses will establish account receivables for those to whom financial aid may not be made until after the student is admitted.

Students interested in attending a CSU campus should call the CSU Chancellor's Office, Academic Affairs, 562-951-4727. Information also can be found online at CSUMentor.edu.