

Sierra Thomassie

Mrs. Delaune

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The Destruction of Hurricane Ida

My name is Sierra Thomassie and I am a senior in high school at 17 years old. I live in an older home in a nice neighborhood and I also live with both my parents and my little brother. Recently Louisiana was hit with Ida, a category four hurricane. My family and I decided to evacuate for a few days until after the storm was over. In reality we evacuated for a week and a half.

On Friday night, my mom told me that we were leaving the next morning to Mentone, Alabama. At first I was excited because I was going to treat this as a mini vacation for myself. Then as the night went on I was growing more fearful. Everyone on social media was talking about how this hurricane was going to be worse than Katrina.

On Saturday morning, the day before the storm, we left for Alabama. We expected to be on the road for six or seven hours. That trip turned into thirteen hours. Everyone was leaving Louisiana on Saturday. Cars were bumper to bumper on the I-10 interstate while it was drizzling with rain.

Monday morning, after the storm, we turned on the news and everyone was full of shock, devastation, anxiety, and sadness. Nobody had heard anything about their homes, cars, valuable belongings, or family left back at home. 900,000 people lost power to their homes. 300,000 electrical poles were knocked down. The main transmission for the electricity had fallen into the Mississippi River. I was so devastated by all the major damage. I was so scared that I had no home to go to once I was back. Luckily my house didn't have much damage.

As the days went on, we heard more news about everyone's homes. My uncle told us, "Your aunt and I's house is okay. We lost our entire patio and some shingles from the roof, but everything else is still in place." I touched my aunt's trembling shoulder while she learned the news about her house. My uncle continued, "Nana and Paw-Paw's house is perfectly fine." You could see the tears fall down their wrinkled faces as they sighed in relief. "Granny's house is also in perfect shape from what I can see," he said. Granny sighed in relief. Then he said, "Now Lacie and Marty, I can't get to your house." Our hearts then dropped down to our feet. We all looked at each other with anxiety and a frantic look in our eyes. Immediately after the call with my uncle ended, we called our neighbor who lived across the street from us. She started off, "I'm currently living inside your house right now. Our entire ceiling caved into our house and there is water everywhere. The kid's rooms look exactly like how you left them." I felt such a relief in my shaking, sweating body. She continued, "The only problem is that your gate is gone, there is water in the laundry room, shingles are gone, and there is water running down your walls." You can see the terror in my parent's eyes. They were so anxious to get home. The phone call soon ended and I began to say, "Look everyone's homes aren't in the worst shape, we all have homes to go back to. We can all begin to relax and be thankful we have what we are left with. Soon we will be home and back to normal." Everyone then hugged each other as relief and happiness began to light up the room.

After almost two weeks it was time for us to come home. As we rode into New Orleans and the Westbank, you were able to see all the damages. You can smell the rain that has just destroyed our town. Shingles were gone, fences were blown away, ceilings were inside of people's houses, trees were peeling out of the ground like paper. I truly felt so much remorse for everyone that had damage to their homes. Some people even lost homes or have a home they cannot live in at this time. Ida truly changed all of our lives forever on August 29, 2021.

Mindy Harlow

Mrs. DeLaune

Yearbook 1

September 15, 2021

Hurricane Ida

I have been through many hurricanes, especially since I live in southeast Louisiana. In fact, I have been through Katrina and Rita, even though I do not really remember them. I have also been through Ike, Isaac, and Gustav. These last three I remember. They were not easy and we had to deal with damage and displacement, but everything always seemed to be back to normal after a few weeks. This one was different. Even before the storm hit, we could feel that it was not going to be a normal hurricane. The Wednesday before the storm was like any other school day. We all knew that there was a hurricane coming but did not think anything of it. That was until I talked to my mom after school. She said my dad was being activated for the storm. He is in the Louisiana Air National Guard, and had to be in Baton Rouge early the next morning. This was not much of a surprise for this happens every storm, but my mom sounded very serious. She said that the Air Guard was expecting the storm to hit as a Category 4 hurricane. Not only would it be a Category 4, but we would be on the worst side of it, the east side. This is a problem because I live in a small Cajun fishing community on the coast of southeast Louisiana. We do not have a levee or wall protecting us from the storm surge, which is water pushed in by the storm. All we had between us and the storm was the marsh. That evening my dad and I tied up our boat and brought all of our outdoor furniture into the garage. The next morning he left well before dawn. As the week went on people seemed to grow more and more

anxious. The storm's path kept shifting closer and closer to us. Eventually they named the storm Ida. The biggest reason people were so nervous was because the storm was forecasted to make landfall on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the worst hurricane to ever hit Louisiana.

After school on Friday, my Mom, my twin sister, and I worked on boarding up the house. We had to hurry because the storm was to hit that Sunday. First, we boarded up the shutters which were not too bad, but then we had to board up the doors and windows. We use these tall sheets of metal that can be bolted in place. These sheets were very heavy and were so sharp that they would cut our hands, but we were used to it. The metal sheets felt grimy and bumpy from years of use and when we would tighten the bolts our nails would scrape against the metal creating a jarring sensation in our fingers. The metal bolts were so abrasive and tough that our fingers became raw. When the bolts were completely tightened they would make a sharp screeching noise that would hurt our ears. Our usually quiet, sleepy town was full of sharp banging, clattering, and shouting as everyone was trying to get ready for this coming storm. When we walked inside, it was very eerie, for the metal sheets blocked out all light from the outside world. It seemed as if we were in a dark isolated cave. By the time we were finished boarding up our house, it was very late, but we could not go to bed yet. We had to start packing things like birth certificates and other paperwork. We also packed our school clothes, work clothes, and sports uniforms just in case we could not get back home by the time school and work started back up. After that, we packed all pet needs, personal hygiene, and any food that may go bad. We usually empty our refrigerators and fridges, but we had just gotten a generator and thought that they would be fine. My Mom even jokingly said "If our generator doesn't work we have bigger problems." She would soon come to regret the irony in those words. We took any valuables that we could not take with us and put them on top of chairs in the garage such as golf bags, bikes,

and other expensive but too big things. After we were done packing we ate, took showers, and went to bed.

It was hard to fall asleep. I was filled with anxiety wondering if this would be the last time I slept in this bed. The next morning we put all of our lighter furniture up on our beds and couch and packed up anything we used that night. When we walked outside it was the opposite of the day before. The whole town was completely silent, almost as if it was under a blanket. There were no chirps from the birds, no talking, and no rumbling of vehicles. The town seemed like a ghost town, abandoned. Most people had evacuated the night before. We followed suit and headed to my nanny's house.

We were the first to arrive at my nanny's house. Eventually there would be 13 people, 7 dogs, and a cat living there. My entire immediate family had evacuated to my nanny's house because we all live in either Barataria or Lafitte. These are both part of the small Cajun town I live in. The town is named Jean Lafitte and the island I live on right next to it is called Barataria. My mom, my sister (Katie), our two dogs, and my cat all slept on the same queen sized air mattress, which felt like a deflated balloon every night. My grandparents slept on the only spare mattress, which was a double. My Uncle Robby and his wife (my Aunt Mandy) slept on the couch with two of their kids, the boy (Rob) being 16 and the girl (Anna) 18. Their other daughter (Allie) and her boyfriend (Jordan) slept on a mat on the floor, Allie being 19 and Jordan being around the same age. Even though the house was over crowded, there were no big fights or too much tension. When tension did build up, someone would diffuse the situation with a joke or a funny story. We would all laugh it off and calm down. When the storm finally did hit, we lost power, cable, and WiFi. Luckily my nanny had a generator and we were able to have air conditioning and were able to run most appliances. What worried us the most was not knowing

what was happening back at home. To pass the time and get our minds off of the storm, we would play board games and sit around and tell stories. None of us slept very well, for the worst of the storm hit at night and of course we were on couches, air mattresses, and the floor. We spent most of the night sitting around the table telling stories and worrying about our homes. We still could not contact anyone and hated not knowing

As the storm started to subside we were able to have some contact with people who stayed back home. Only a few texts could go through and our service would randomly go out. Bit by bit we were able to figure out the devastation and damage in our small town. We were sent pictures of houses floating down what was once a major road, water up to people's ceilings, and boats on top of houses, businesses, and flipped over in the bayou. We still could not tell how much damage our own houses had. We were then sent pictures of our town's two schools, Fisher High School and Leo Kerner Elementary. Both buildings were completely under water and Fisher's roof had been torn off. This was huge news, for the last time these buildings flooded was hurricane Katrina and, even then, it was not to the extent of now. We soon came to learn that Katrina had nothing on hurricane Ida. The school's flooding meant that the cement wall built around upper Lafitte was topped. This had never happened before. Upper Lafitte became a bowl with nowhere for the water to go. This was terrible and destroyed all houses that were not raised in this area, but it helped out lower Lafitte and Barataria. When the wall was breached, it was stated that the water level in Barataria dropped a total of two feet. All houses in Lower Lafitte and Barataria that were nine and a half feet or lower still flooded, but it would have been a lot worse if the wall hadn't been breached. As time went on, we were able to see posts on Facebook and that was where we truly realized the extent of the damage. We saw how the bridge connecting Barataria to Lafitte had fallen into the water. This really upset my mom because this

meant that we had no way home. We were told that our house definitely had some damage, but that they couldn't get close enough to tell how badly.

Finally we were able to get to our house. As we crossed over the bridge to get into Lafitte a foul smell hit our noses. It seemed to be a mix of wet mud and dead fish. The water had not gone down all the way so we drove very carefully so as not to get saltwater up under the car. As we slowly drove down the main road into the main part of Lafitte, we were able to catch a glimpse of some of the damage. People's entire lives were piled outside on the road. To anyone passing, it looked like garbage, but to those people, it was precious memories and heirlooms. Some people were working on their houses to try and salvage what they could, but others sat on their porches exhausted and covered in mud. They seemed overwhelmed and dejected looking at all of the damage and devastation. As we neared the town hall we could see the community coming together to help each other out. They helped each other with cleaning and pickup, and they helped the linemen and National Guard by giving them directions and food. In order to get to my house, we had to cross the bayou, but our bridge had been destroyed. We had to cross with a mud boat because anything bigger would get stuck. In order to get to the mud boat, we had to step down onto the marsh that had piled up into our bayou and navigate our way to the boat. By this time, the smell became overwhelming. It seemed to seep into every one's skin, clothes, and boots. It seemed as though there were no other smells left. As if our noses had given up and refused to smell anything else. As we traveled down the bayou, we were able to see the damage done to Barataria and Lower Lafitte. They looked like war zones. There were caskets in people's yards and even in the streets. The cars looked like a child had poured them out of a bucket and left them where they lay. They were on roofs, in the bayou, and on top of boats. The one image that I remember perfectly is a house that was on top of another house. It looked as if someone

had lifted it up and stacked them, as if they were stacking Jenna blocks. In these areas, people did not even have things to put out on the road, it was all completely ruined. Some came home to empty lots where their houses once were, others wished their houses would have just burned to the ground. One person even said, "It's not like I can save anything, now I have to do the hard work of tearing this thing down. I wish it would have just burned down." As we got closer to our house our hopes dwindled. We had never seen our town look like this. We pulled up on some marsh and tied the boat up. Our dock was twisted and our boat was severely damaged, most likely unfixable. It looked like someone took our dock and crumbled it like a piece of paper. As we walked up to our house, we had to be very careful because swamp mud covered every crevice and corner. The mud was as slippery as polished marble and would suck your feet in like quicksand. Marsh and people's things littered our yard. We also had to be careful because someone had seen an alligator and a cottonmouth snake on our porch. We went around to the front of the house and lifted up the garage door. It had gotten 3-4 feet of mud in it. My mom and another resident of Lafitte had come and taken our things and the majority of the mud out the day before. Seeing all of our stuff piled in the front like junk was heartbreaking. Through hard work and a lot of help we were able to get all of the mud out of the garage and tear the Sheetrock out. We did not think our house had gotten flooded because there was no mud in it, but a few days later we were proven wrong. When we walked inside we were hit with a sickly sweet smell that seemed to assault our nostrils. Our house had indeed flooded and mold had begun to take over. We also had major water damage from holes in our roof and hardy board missing from the side of our house. This also created a ton of mold and added to the horrendous smell. I had almost missed the smell of the swamp mud. By the time we truly realized the extent of the damage in our house, school had started back up. We would go to our house on the

weekends to get ready to gut our house.

Now we are up to date. We have recently learned that we most likely will not be in our house for another six months. We are staying at my nanny's house until then and have been living in their upstairs rooms. We don't have enough mattresses for everyone, but at least we have a place to live. We have received major damage, but there are people who have nothing left. At least we have somewhere to stay and a home to get back to.

Katie Harlow

Mrs. DeLaune

Yearbook

September 27, 2021

Ida

Hurricanes play a big role in the lives of a lot of people, especially those who live in Louisiana. When a hurricane is on its way everyone is affected. People begin to stock up on gas, non perishable foods, water, etc. Houses begin to be boarded up and people begin to evacuate. However for families with national guard members, hurricanes start to take effect well before they hit the gulf. As soon as the storm begins to form the guard is notified, and once they become positive that the hurricane will hit Louisiana they are activated. They are stationed all over Louisiana preparing to protect against the storm.

This is exactly how my experience with hurricane Ida began. The week of Ida my dad had been getting alerts regarding the storm, and by Wednesday he was activated, he left early Thursday morning. The next day evacuation orders came into effect for the town of Lafitte (where I live). It is a small shrimping community south of New Orleans. We always flood so having an evacuation order in place was almost given. I went to school that Friday, but when I walked onto campus everything felt different. It was unusually windy and the air had a metal smell to it, the smell of a soon to be rain storm. Although the hurricane was two days out, I could tell it was coming. That day gas station lines were crazy long, grocery stores were packed, and students were getting checked out left and right. I stayed the entire day, as I had a couple of classes I knew I couldn't miss. My sister and I left school and attempted to get gas. Eventually

we gave up and just headed home. Once I got home the hurricane preparations began.

My mom, sister, and I spent about three hours boarding windows and moving outdoor furniture inside. My fingers had marks on them from screwing in the wing nuts on the boarded up windows and doors, they felt rough and dry. I got a whiff of a metal type smell and realized it was my hands. Inside the house it was pitch black. With the sun being out, it felt weird. No sunlight, no warmth, just darkness. Once finished I started to pack clothes for when we evacuate. Our plan was to leave Friday night and head to Florida, in the end we decided that evacuating to my aunt's house the next day would be a lot easier. Plus, I was not worried. I figured I would leave for my aunts and be back in no time. It was just a hurricane, I knew the routine. I went to bed that night with ease. Little did I know, that would be the last time I would sleep in my own bed for a long time.

I woke up Saturday morning almost forgetting about the hurricane. It felt like a normal Saturday. I had slept in, the house was quiet, almost serene. It was not until I walked out into the living room that I remembered. The wall of windows covering the backside of my house were dull. The windows, which usually had beams of light shining through it every morning, were covered, thus, blocking all light from entering my house. The warmth I had usually felt every morning was no longer there. I saw my mom in the kitchen and asked about any updates on the hurricane. To my dismay, it was not good news. In the middle of the night the storm had grown. The hurricane was now projected to make landfall as a category 4, at this point the only good thing going for us was that it was moving fast and west. Before I started on the rest of my packing I decided to fix myself an egg sandwich for breakfast. It was an over-easy egg, on two slices of buttered and toasted bread, with a dash of Tony's. In the middle of all of the chaos this gave me a sense of normalcy and calmness. I bit into the sandwich and the yolk soaked into the

bread. The first bite delivered a sense of happiness to my taste buds. The spice of the Tony's and the juiciness of the egg gave me serotonin. For a moment I forgot all that was happening around me. After eating I cleared the table and immediately started packing. I packed a week's worth of clothes, toothbrushes, hairbrush and anything else I felt I might need while I'm away from home. I brought school clothes, volleyball uniforms, and school work into my moms room and packed it in a larger suitcase. I also made sure to grab a small bag and put all chargers and cords in it. After I finished packing all of my stuff I went to my moms room and realized that they were still not done. I helped them gather my animals things such as food, beds, collars and for the cat litter. We have two dogs and a cat, and for my mom and sister, it made the car ride to my Aunts house interesting. At around 12:00 I decided to pack my car and leave ahead of them in search of gas. My car was at half a tank, but I knew this could be my last chance at getting gas for a while. My car was finally packed and as I sat in the driver's seat and started the car, I took a deep breath and hoped that this hurricane would not be as bad as everyone was saying. As I pull out of the driveway and onto the highway I say bye to my house, in hopes that I'll be back soon.

Both gas stations in Lafitte were out so as I drove to Marrero I mentally prepared myself to sit in an hour line minimum. However as I pulled up to the Circle K on Ames I saw a relatively short line. While I was waiting in line I called my mom and asked if I could go to my boyfriend's house before I headed to my aunts. He had just got out of quarantine from COVID and I wanted to see him before the storm hit. My mom told me it was fine but that I had to stop at Walmart before I went to pick up some snacks and a portable litter box for the cat. Finally, after about twenty minutes it was my turn to get gas. I saw people filling cars, gas cans, and even four wheelers. The smell of gasoline was stronger than ever, it engulfed the air and it was all I could

smell. Once I finished, I left and headed to Walmart. When I got to Walmart, I parked and saw a line of people outside the entrance. Although the line was moving relatively fast, it gave me a flashback to the beginning of COVID. For a split second I wondered, when will life get back to normal? As I got out of my car, the wind started to pick up. Trees started swaying and the air got cooler. I felt the air rush underneath me and could not help but think that this was only the beginning. After about five minutes I walked into Walmart and it was packed. The fruit and cold sections were stocked, the non perishable food however, was non-existent. Nevertheless I managed to find the few food items I needed and picked up a litter box. I left Walmart and headed to my boyfriend's house.

When I got there I pulled into the spot I normally parked in. His parents were outside, so I said hi and walked in. I spent the next couple of hours with him watching Netflix and around 5 or 6 o'clock I got a call from my mom. Just when I thought things couldn't get worse, they did. The storm had started moving more east. Inching closer and closer by the minute. On top of that Ida had gotten stronger and was projected to be a possible Category 5 hurricane. I immediately thought of my home. And by home I mean the town of Lafitte. The house I live in was the last thing on my mind. It was the town that I became worried about. I worried about the people and their houses. See Lafitte is more than just a town to me, the entire place is my home, my family. I knew that Ida would not have mercy on my little town, but I hoped that maybe the storm would not cause as much damage as predicted. About an hour later Gabe and I headed to my aunts house for dinner.

Once we got to my aunt's house, we had some shrimp tacos. It smelled just as good as it tasted. It had the perfect blend of seasoning that filled my nose with joy. After talking for a while Gabe left for home and I unpacked my things and settled in. I set up a place to sleep on the couch

and went to sleep. The next morning I woke up to a busy house. Breakfast was fixed and phone calls were being made. My paran and his family were still in Lafitte and planned on staying behind for the storm. However, through lots of convincing my hard headed paran finally packed up and arrived at my aunt's house around 11:00. The house was now filled with 13 people, 7 dogs, and a cat. But the house, being at what seemed like full capacity, did not bother anyone. We were just glad that everyone was safe and together.

As we waited for Ida to hit we watched the news and, to our dismay, it began to slow down. The only thing going for us before then was that it was moving fast. What had become a storm that was going to hit at 1:00 pm was now not going to hit until later that night.

When the storm finally hit the winds picked up and the rain got hard. It looked like something straight out of a movie. As we were listening to the roaring winds we continued to get updates from those who stayed in Lafitte, which mainly consisted of shrimpers who stayed on their skiffs. With every update our hope for the town of Lafitte lessened. In just an hour houses were flooded, boats were sunk, and people's entire livelihoods were destroyed. By the second hour, our bridge connecting Barataria and Lafitte was destroyed, caskets were floating down the bayou, and Fisher high school was done for. The damage to Lafitte was nothing we have ever seen before. We woke up that morning and my paran, cousin, and cousin's boyfriend headed to Lafitte. They had to launch a boat at crown point and after what seemed like hours they finally let them through. The pictures and description we got were heart breaking. It was devastation and destruction everywhere they went. Houses had gone completely under water and some had even floated off over their properties and into neighborhoods multiple blocks down. There was a 50 foot skiff floating down the highway and marsh land covering what was left of peoples houses and yards. My family and I were left grief stricken. Our houses got

damaged, but compared to everyone else in Lafitte we were fine. The grief we felt was for our town and the people and buildings was what hit us the most.

Hurricane Ida was the storm we always talked about. The storm that would completely destroy Lafitte. It did and became everything we hoped it would not be. However, with all of the destruction this storm caused to my home, we have stayed strong. It may take years, but Lafitte will be rebuilt. The people of Lafitte are stronger than Ida, we will get through this, we will prevail.

Kacey Nguyen

Mrs.DeLaune

Yearbook I

17 September 2021

Hurricane Ida

“Kacey, we’re moving to Louisiana,” a few years ago that little sentence completely changed my life. I was born in a place that did not really see much intense weather, except for maybe the sun. I have vague memories of practicing earthquake drills in elementary school, but I have never been in a situation where I had to put my knowledge of the occurrence to use. Growing up in California, I did not have much experience with hurricanes, let alone rain. Honestly, before coming to Louisiana I was not even sure what a hurricane was or looked like. All I knew was that a hurricane was a type of natural disaster where it rained. Moving to Louisiana and seeing how much it rained here was a very unusual discovery for me. I think that because this is all still kind of new to me, I easily get very frightened by the thought of what could happen.

The week Hurricane Ida would hit us started off as most other weeks do; I went to school, did my work, and talked to my friends. But, this was not going to be like every other week. I did not know that there was going to be a hurricane until a few days before it was supposed to hit us. I remember hearing about it from my friends who were checking the news, but even then I did not really think much about it. To me it would just be like all of the other storms where we would get a day or two off of school and then it would be back to normal. As the school day went on, I kept hearing my classmates talk about Ida, claiming that they were going to evacuate. Hearing so

many people talk about Ida started to make me concerned, but I still was not sold on the idea that it would be that bad.

Usually my dad is very set on the idea of us staying home for hurricanes. He is one of those types of people who believe that they can survive anything and everything that life throws at them. So, I was shocked when he insisted that I pack a suitcase of clothes and valuables in case we decided to evacuate. “Kacey, get ready! We might go to Houston!” he shouted to me as he frantically ran out the door to fill up his car with gas. I think that was when I really started to really worry about what could happen during this hurricane. But after some deliberation, my dad decided that it was best if my family just stayed home because we had a generator, and he did not think that the area we were in was going to be hit too badly. As it started to grow closer to the day Hurricane Ida would hit us, I started to become more worried.

Before I knew it, it was Sunday August 29, 2021, the day that Hurricane Ida would hit New Orleans. That very morning, some of my cousins came to stay at my house and wait out the hurricane with us. At first, the storm did not seem too bad. It was just some wind and rain, nothing I had not seen before. But, in a matter of minutes the wind began to pick up immensely, and all I could do was sit back and watch. Looking out the window of my room, I could see the wind blowing so hard that the tree near my window began to bend. I was terrified that it would break and possibly hit the house; I think that is what terrified me the most about the hurricane. Just the thought of something falling on my house with all of my family inside was enough to make me change my mind about the hurricane not being a big deal. And, it was raining so hard I thought the water would eventually get into the house. The blaring of the weather alerts on my phone frightened me out of my trance; it felt like I was getting a new weather alert every hour. Eventually I turned off my ringer to stop myself from looking at my phone to check what it was

saying. All I wanted to do was sleep through the hurricane, but it was hard to do so with everything going on. My room I was in was filled with the roars of thunder and I could hear my dogs barking from the living room. The whistling of the wind made me feel as if something was going to come crashing down any moment.

Through all of the noise, I heard a faint voice call my name through my bedroom door. So, I got up from my bed and walked out to my kitchen. Almost immediately, the scent of my favorite noodles filled my senses; I do not think I even realized that I was hungry until there was food sitting right in front of me. I could feel my mouth start to burn as soon as I took the first bite. As we ate, my family and I shared stories of past memories, and soon enough the room was full of laughter. The storm going on right outside of my house no longer seemed so scary and my fears began to subside. Before I knew it, several hours had passed and the wind had begun to calm down until it was as if it had never been there at all. Looking at all of the branches and shingles laying in the ground in front of my house, I began to feel grateful that for me that was the extent of it. For the first time since the weather started to get bad, I felt peaceful and safe. Finally, I was able to go back to my room and get some sleep after what seemed like the longest day of my life.

Emily Eschette

Yearbook I

Mrs. Delaune

17 September 2021

Surviving Ida

My friends and I sat cramped in my compact White Jeep Wrangler on the way home. Our bags weigh us down as they sit on our laps. My car smelled like a combination of must and body odor after two hours of volleyball practice. We were conversing on our plans for the weekend as I brought everyone home and watched the scenery of Marrero go by. Thursday night we all planned to go to the first Friday Night Lights of the season at the Shaw stadium. I missed the Friday Nights feeling, the humongous LED lights shining down on the field to show the players on the field with hair stuck to their faces in sweat. The student section was full of squished bodies and cheering voices. I haven't experienced it since Sophomore year before COVID hit. It was going to be so much fun, after the game we planned to spend the night at Kylie's house. On Saturday, we were going to go swimming and invite some more of our friends over. Little did we know our lives were about to be drastically changed for the coming weeks.

Driving off from Kylie's medium sized homey house, I started thinking about ways to tell my parents. Hopping out of my car with a pep in my step, I grabbed my 20 pound school bag, which caused me back pains at 17, and went through the rundown front door of my average suburban home.

“MOMM! DADD! I'M HOME!” I exclaimed after shutting the front door. I was greeted

with my dog jumping frantically, tail wagging and the sweet scent of my mother's famous red beans coming from the stove.

"Hey sweetie!", my parents both said weirdly at the same time.

After setting my school bag down, I sat atop the stool behind the kitchen counter, the cold granite meeting my arms with an icy coolness. As I told my parents about my plans, they listened intently, but I knew something was off. When I was done talking they both gave each other a look I could not decipher. Then my dad said, "Em, we are evacuating tomorrow". I remember being devastated because I just wanted to stay with my friends.

"I don't understand, where did this storm even come from? It's like it came out of nowhere", I said exasperated.

"I know sweetie but we have to go. I have a bad feeling about this." My dad said while planting a hand on my shoulder.

"Okay, I guess it's kind of like vacation. Where are we going?", I asked.

"Toledo Bend", My mom answered. I told my friends the news and it's safe to say they weren't happy. We had a camper so unlike most other people we had the resources to evacuate so we would.

Friday night, I was a bundle of nerves. We didn't know what was going to happen. We left the house around two in the morning so we could avoid evacuation traffic. I was fine with it because I would just sleep the whole way. We all boarded the medium sized camper and got on the road. Immediately I went to my bed in the camper to get back to sleep. About three hours later, I woke up disoriented in a Walmart parking lot. The fluorescent lights of the Walmart

parking lot shined through the window. Apparently we would be parking here until morning, so I snuggled under the covers of my bed and went back to sleep. It was hard to ignore the springs digging into my back from the uncomfortable bed but I finally fell back asleep. Around 8 am, we woke up and started preparing for the rest of the drive. I got out of bed and put on a comfy pair of clothes, the soft fabric rubbed against my skin and the smell of laundry detergent wafted up to my nose. After getting dressed, my parents started the camper's engine. I heard the loud roar of the engine starting and a buzz beneath my feet as it came to life. I dropped into the recliner that lays right behind the driver's seat. Soon enough we were on the road, every bump we hit made me jump out of my seat and back down. I heard the soft tunes of country music as my mother turned on the radio. I decided that the best thing to do to pass the time was read. I opened my book, hearing the spine cracking and the crisp sound of papers turning.

About two hours later, I was almost done with my book and we finally arrived at our destination. Stepping out of the RV, I was immediately met with warm air and the sounds of insects. The fresh smell of pine trees and oak hit me. Out in front of me was a humongous lake that went on for miles. The reflection of the clouds in the sky sat atop the quiet lake. I was content knowing this may be my home for the next week.

On Sunday night, my parents and I all sat at the table located in the middle of the RV. We watched the news intently waiting for any news of the storm. Apparently the storm has been updated to a high Category 4 hurricane. We felt helpless knowing we could do nothing to help the people of our hometown and surrounding towns.

Days passed without power, gas, and water back home. I got antsy. I hated the waiting,

hated that I couldn't see my friends, and I feared what we might go back home to.

In the meantime, my dad and I went fishing everyday. Tuesday evening was the perfect evening to get out poles in the water. My dad and I made the hike down the bumpy hill to the lake ahead of us. The sky burned between a mixture of red, orange, and yellow as the sun sunk low. The crunch of leaves and sticks met our ears as our feet moved across the land. As we reached the small dock, our kayaks came into sight. My dad helped me get into mine carefully. I took a step off the dock and into the kayak. My foot wobbled as I stepped in the kayak dipped to the side I stepped on. I quickly put my whole body in as I saw my chance. Dropped the foot paddles into the water I took off toward the other side of the bank. Small waves gathered behind making a little swishing sound but other than that all I could hear for miles was crickets and other critters. As I reached the other side of the bank, I threw my line out with my favorite top water bait attached. Waiting a few seconds I started to pop the bait across the top of the water by jerking my pole back. Little drops of water shot at me as I pulled the line back. Mosquitos swarmed around me, one landing on my leg injecting its stinger into my leg. I yelled out and smacked it away, leaving a stinging sensation on my leg. All the while this was happening I didn't notice the sound of my reel pulling line out towards the bank. I started shouting, "FISH ON, FISH ON." I jerked my arm round and round reeling the fish in. I finally got the fish all the way, swinging it to get it in the kayak. I reach into his large mouth trying not to cut my hand on his tiny but sharp teeth. Getting the hook out, I started paddling back to the dock to show my dad. I couldn't wait to show him my big catch. He was going to be so proud. However, the fish had different plans. Once I get half to the dock the fish starts to wiggle his slimes body and jumps right out of reach back into the water. I stared after he fell

in shock that that just happened. I get back to the doc not wasting any time getting out of the kayak and rushing to tell my dad what happened.

“DAD! DAD, I caught a fish you won’t believe it he was huge but I lost him I lost him,” I exclaimed to my dad.

“I don’t see a fish,” he said laughing.

“You don’t understand I had him then he jumped out,” I said back to him. He looked at me with a smile in his eyes and I knew he believed me.

“I believe you, Em. Come on, let's go eat dinner.” He walked back into the camper and I followed.

That was one of my favorite moments of evacuation. That moment showed me that even though something devastating happened, I could still spend time with family and that is a positive. After that experience, we spent another long and hot week there doing everything and anything we could to entertain ourselves. My parents and I were starting to want to spend less and less time with each other. In such close quarters there is no room for privacy and we were all ready to go home. Then the day finally came where we could go back home. I was so excited to finally go back home. That Wednesday morning we all got up early anxious to get home. After a week and a half we finally had power back at our house.

A few hours later we finally came into New Orleans. My nose was practically pressed up against the window, my eyes trying to absorb anything and everything they could. It was saddening the amount of damage we saw. People’s roofs were torn off their house. Some had bright blue tarps covering the holes with sunlight bouncing back off of them. Getting home I realized we should be very grateful for our house compared to other people. As we pulled into

our driveway, I could see our house looked the same as when we left. I stepped out of the RV, stretching my arms back with my bone cracking. My ears were met with the sounds of generators all around us as some people didn't have power yet. Looking towards the house we could see that the only damage we had was a few shingles missing. As we walked into the backyard we saw the arms of the fan that was on our back porch cover, scattered across the overgrown grass of our backyard. Walking back in the house, it smelled musty due to the two weeks of no power or air flow. It didn't matter to me because we were finally home and the first thing I would do is see my friends. I finally realized how lucky we actually were and my heart hurt for those who were not so lucky. I was grateful that all of my family ended up okay. After this storm I learned that as long as everyone is okay, it's okay because most material things can be replaced.

Delaney Cline

Mrs. Delaune

Yearbook I

15 September 2021

Hurricane Ida Narrative

On the warm fall morning of Thursday, August 29, 2021, the thought of a hurricane potentially hitting my city was the last thing on my mind. I went to school like normal, and started hearing people anxiously talk about a hurricane that had formed and its projected path was straight to us. By Friday, it was all everyone at school was talking about. I sat in Calculus, and watched the news channel that Ms. Welman has put on. The colors on the screen indicated that we were in a very dangerous zone. My mom had told me on Thursday night that if the hurricane got up to a category four, we would evacuate. Sure enough, by Friday morning, it was projected to hit as a four. I called my mom while driving on the way home from school and the first thing she told me was that we would be leaving tomorrow morning. There was already terrible traffic, cars honking at each other and tension on the road. I got together with my parents after school and we got an Airbnb in San Antonio, Texas, which was approximately eight hours away from my house. We left around eleven thirty a.m. on Saturday, and didn't arrive there until seven a.m. on Sunday morning. The feeling of the hard leather seats and the small space made the ride extremely uncomfortable. It took us about 21 hours to get there!

By the time we had arrived in San Antonio, there was only a few hours left until the hurricane hit. My dad and I, being in a new city, decided to try an In-and-Out burger for lunch. The restaurant was very overrated, but the burger still had flavor and was pretty good. The fries,

however, were bland. After settling down a little bit, my dad and I decided to go to Six Flags to get our minds away from the hurricane for a little while. It was my first time ever at six flags, and I had a good time. We rode many rides, and it was great to feel the adrenaline rush from riding a roller coaster again and having the wind in my face for the first time in a little while. However, while we were there, the hurricane began to make landfall and we were quickly getting news of how things were going back home. Everything escalated quickly, and it was heartbreaking that we had no clue how our house or our families' houses were doing. We began to get nervous, because by that point Ida was hitting us as a category four, with its top wind speeds reaching up to 157, which is a category five. I was almost two years old when Hurricane Katrina hit, meaning I don't remember much, so this was a whole new experience for me. Photos and videos began emerging of homes underwater and people evacuating. I do not remember any of the damage from Katrina, so seeing everything was heartbreaking. We had no choice but to try and keep distracting ourselves. Sunday night, we decided to head downtown and have dinner on the riverwalk. We had the best authentic Mexican food that we had ever had! The quesadilla I had was delicious, very cheesy and was seasoned very well. Although it was a good distraction, my parents and I still found ourselves watching videos of hurricane damage, and the worst had not even hit yet. We went back to the airbnb and the last news I had heard before I went to sleep was that a levee had been overtopped in Plaquemines parish and a part of it was being evacuated— this was very nerve wracking because the area was only about 25 minutes from my home.

We had originally planned to only be there for one night, but after getting news that we were being advised not to go home, we ended up getting two nights in a hotel in downtown San Antonio, on the riverwalk. We spent the next two days shopping, eating at different restaurants

and trying new flavors, and exploring the sights of the city, such as the Alamo. We soon got the word that AOL would not be going back to school until the next Monday—a whole week. As great as it would have been to stay in San Antonio, it was costly. My paran had just gotten power at his house in Prairieville, outside of Baton Rouge, so we were invited to go there and stay with my cousins and family for a few days. It took us twelve hours to drive from San Antonio to Prairieville, and we ended up staying there for three days. Those three days were the worst days of my life. I value my privacy and alone time, and I was not able to get any of that because I would constantly have to interact with my cousins and family. Again, it got very uncomfortable not being able to sleep because all I could hear was people talking and only being able to see my family members. The only plus was that I got to visit LSU's campus for the first time and I had really got tacos. Once my PawPaw got power back in Marrero, we finally headed back home. We stayed with my PawPaw for another three days, but as much as I love him, I was ready to go home. We quickly began to hear of everyone getting power back, But Terrytown, where I live, is always last. It began to get hard to hold on to hope as time went on. Finally, after almost two weeks without power, we had gotten it back at our house. As fast as I could, I packed everything up and headed home. Being able to lay in my own comfy bed, in my own room, in my own house, for the first time in over a week, was a feeling I do not think I will ever forget.

It began to get difficult hearing about how my community had fared from the hurricane. Just driving around, it was evident that many places had received serious damage, and it was hard not being able to go out and do things, as many places were not open. From the moment I got home on Thursday, all the way until this past Wednesday, the fifteenth, I had hung out with my friends every day. The best feeling and sign of normalcy, for me at least, was the word that

we would be having our first home football game that Saturday. It felt great to be able to see all of my friends on the dance team and support Shaw, because we had been anticipating our first game. Although we did not perform as usual, it was still fun to watch the game and spend time together. Afterwards, I went to Hooters and saw a bunch of my friends, and it was a great night and a distraction from everything going on around us.

Overall, the hurricane was a great learning experience because it taught me not to take things for granted. However, it really hurt to see how many of my friends had significant damage to their homes and to see nearby communities struggling. Personally, after examination, my house only had damage to my garage, some shingles off, a large piece of siding hanging off, and MANY tree branches. I am so grateful that we did not have worse damage, but I would really like to go help those in need soon. Overall, Hurricane Ida was a very humbling, however stressful, experience that I hope my state will not experience again any time soon.

Christina Mauldin

Mrs. Delaune

Newspaper

16 September 2021

My Hurricane Ida Experience

The beginning of senior year brings the feelings of joy, excitement, and anticipation. I, Christina Mauldin, was finally a senior at the Academy of Our Lady. I have been waiting for this moment for four years and it was finally here. Throughout the pandemic and many events, I made it to senior year. The school year started out normal still considering safety precautions taken due to the pandemic, although, this was our new normal. With the beginning of the school year season arriving, hurricane season comes as well. August through November is a danger zone in Louisiana and other coastal states. We have a drill for these months. Hurricane season brings a feeling the New Orleans and Louisiana community as a whole know too much about. The community we once knew can be changed in one day within a short notice. Hurricane season is a known risk living in New Orleans but the beauty and true soul feeling radiating from the city makes it all worth it.

The week of Hurricane Ida started like any other “normal” week would. Although I heard about a tropical storm, I didn’t expect the outcomes to be as tragic as they were. Throughout the week, the hurricane began to intensify, along with my anxiety. While sitting in civics class, the background noise filled with discussions about Hurricane Ida. Hurricanes are known to cause extreme damage so I began to worry. I was trying to shake it off but the talk about the intensity

of Hurricane Ida began to worry me. It was said to be coming on the sixteenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. All of my friends began to talk about if and where they are evacuating to. Houston seemed to be the hotspot location. This worried me greatly. I began to wonder if my parents were planning to evacuate, where we were going to go, when we were leaving, and much more. Thoughts and questions ran through my head as the chatter of my friends continued. I wanted to evacuate considering the last hurricane was a horrible experience for me. Hurricane Zeta knocked the power out for over seven days last hurricane season and happened when I was quarantined with a positive case of COVID-19. I could not move to any location besides my room in order to keep my family members and others safe. The thought of going through a feeling like that again worried me. When I got home, I began to question the procedure. There was no planned evacuation and I began to worry. I called my brother in my room to look for open hotels for the family to evacuate to. Houston, Texas, seemed to be booked to capacity. I did not know where else to go and I began to feel a lump in my throat as I worried about what would happen. My brother suggested Atlanta, Georgia. There were hotels available so we decided to book a room. One of my friends wanted to evacuate as well so she came along. We left early Saturday morning. What was originally an eight hour car ride, turned into a twelve hour one. The traffic was heavy. My view for hours consisted of cars behind more cars and the tall green trees lining down I-10. Finally, we arrived. I knew this was not exactly a vacation but I told myself I was going to try and relax. Atlanta has plenty of well known restaurants in the city with flavor filled food. All the food I ate tasted like it was created with love and plenty of seasonings. Although the hurricane was still in my mind, the sceneries, places, and food in Atlanta brought a comforting feeling over me. I felt as though I was safe and welcomed. This had me thinking I

might possibly consider moving out there after college. The city felt nice and just for a moment, everything felt normal.

Monday, August 30, was the morning my stomach dropped. As I woke up, I can remember checking my phone and seeing the devastation Hurricane Ida brought to my city. Pictures filled my feed, causing a feeling I will never forget. One picture that stayed in my mind was the picture of Fisher High school in Lafitte, Louisiana, almost completely under water. This broke my heart for everyone who attends that school. After seeing all the damage I began to wonder if my house was ok. I called the neighbor and thankfully there was no major damage besides some siding being removed. I thanked God over and over that morning in the hotel bed for protecting my home and my family. The power outage was a scary thing to hear. Many questions ran through my head, I began to panic. I almost felt somewhat selfish considering I was scared about power when people had their houses underwater and all their belongings ruined. Thinking about this allowed me to calm down and realized how truly blessed I was in this situation. Pictures continued to pop up on my phone as I sat in my hotel room feeling helpless in another state as my people and the state I love was in desperate need.

I only packed for a few days so we decided to go home and get more clothes. My brother had to fly out for work, but the airports in Louisiana were all shut down. We decided to travel to Houston so he would be able to fly out. While in Houston, Texas, we were able to visit and enjoy time with family. These relatives were the same people that we evacuated to for Hurricane Katrina. This brought memories back to the members of my family. This time sixteen years ago, we were living through the same events.

We decided to stay in Lafayette, Louisiana, until the power came back on. It was

announced that it could possibly take over a month to turn the power back on. I decided not to let the idea of no power worry me. My family was safe and my home was together. I had many things to be thankful for at the moment. I remember seeing a picture on Instagram of Entergy trucks coming to Louisiana and becoming filled with gratitude. These people were leaving their families to help us. I felt so thankful in the moment. The power was back within a week and I was so relieved to return home.

This experience taught me many things. Hurricane Ida is something I will never forget. This allowed me to look at life in a different perspective. I have gained such gratitude towards the things in my life. The normal days, regular schedule, and even headache of homework, were things I missed that I never thought I could miss. I learned to be thankful for all the little things in life. The city I call home is strong. We have been through many obstacles but we always overcome them. We have only gotten stronger from this.

Christana Cavalier

Mrs. Delaune

Newspaper I

September 23, 2021

Chills of Ida

When the news of hurricane Ida first struck, I couldn't help but think that it was just another storm that would come and go. Normally, my peers and I never worry about storms, because they always tend to shift and never turn out to be as bad as projected. However, this time was different. My family seemed a little more nervous than usual. It occurred to me that this was not going to be just any storm when my school announced its closing. I was sitting in my Calculus class when I got the news.

My mom began to worry and she texted me that she was going to leave work early. I remember her texting me that she was going to check me out of school, after she went to Walmart and saw the outrageous amount of people there storm preparing. After I left school, I went home to find my whole family also home, all seeming to be on edge. My mom was freaking out, and told me to call into work and tell them I was not coming in. After my family went out to gather groceries, water, and gas, we all came back home and played cards, waiting for the storm to hit.

It was just a little rain at first, thinking that it wouldn't get much worse than that. Hours later, the speed of the hurricane picked up and we really got to witness what a true hurricane is about. My family watched out of our little screen door with amusement. The roar of the wind,

screaming as it hit the houses in my small neighborhood. It peeled away at the houses like paint peeling off of a wall. I remember watching in awe, as my family and I watched my neighbor's roof fly off. It started off as a shingle or two, but then left unrecognizable damage. In a swift hurry, the roof flew off before our eyes. It was gone. The playground near my house where I once played, was gone. The big light poles that flashed in my eyes once before as a child, had been slayed to the ground. The trees that I once played under, had been ripped out of ground and crumbled like a piece of paper. I watched with great sadness in my eyes, as the place I called home was ripped to pieces. It smelled like defeat, as the great storm crashed over my small town. My grandparents watched in agony, as the place they fell in love in, fell to the ground. Looking outside, it was dark and grey. You couldn't see as far as east from west. It was ghostly looking. Everything was cold and temperate. I felt the cold and rigid rain hit my skin like 100 tiny needles piercing it.

After the great storm was over, my family trailed outside to view the damage. One by one, we walked outside the tiny doorway to see the angelic town, smashed and crumbled like Goliath hammered it with his big arms. It was devastating. There were tree branches everywhere, pieces of houses on the ground, and the life that we all once had, had been destroyed.

Everyone started coming together to pick up debris that was left behind. The small community came together to help each other out. It warmed my heart to see just how helpful and kind everyone was to each other. It's always in times of need, that the community comes together to help everyone. The broken pieces of debris were like the life that the people in my small town had created. Once was beautiful and bright, but was destroyed and left on the ground like dirty rubbish. All in all, the community came together, and at last, helped each other out to

pick up the brokenness that was left behind.

Brianna Garrison

Mrs. DeLaune

Yearbook I

23 September 2021

Tired Eyes From the Storm

Enduring Hurricane Ida was undoubtedly one of the most draining, yet stressful hurricanes I have yet to live through. Most of this is due to where I live. My house is in a pretty small and somewhat secluded neighborhood in Pearl River, Louisiana. Our neighborhood is formed into a large U-shape, with my house at one of the ends of the U. And by somewhat secluded, I mean a particularly dense thicket of woods surrounds all of the houses around my neighborhood—aside from the retention pond that spans across the left side of my house all the way to the back of the house on the other end of the U. Needless to say, flooding is a common occurrence where I live, although we do have ditches along the front of the houses to counter some of the flooding. However, my family has more than just our house to worry about; we also rent out two other houses that are in the New Orleans area. Thankfully, neither of them are in flood zones, but there still existed the concern of damage befalling them during the hurricane. Needless to say, stress was at an all time high in the time leading up to and during hurricane Ida. My parents and I made sure to charge our devices up until our power went out from the storm, so that we still had ways to communicate with others and could check up on when our power would supposedly turn back on. I am unsure if my parents felt it, but the anticipation right before the storm almost felt like static electricity filled the air around us. As time went on and the sun began to dip down, it was as though the house itself along with everyone inside it were bracing

themselves for the storm to hit. The few times I went outside in my backyard to let my dog out, I felt the pressure of the wind whipping past my face and blowing through my eyelashes. The rough breeze was not cold, though—it carried a slightly warm temperature within it. I was happy to be back inside my home while it still had working air conditioning. Although, the nicety of cool air did not last much longer.

It was around 7:40 p.m. when the power began to flicker off and back on. I could hear the groans and complaints of my parents from the living room each time the lights went out. Louder yet, I heard the roaring of rain on the rooftop and windows of my house. From within my own room, I could see rainwater pouring like a miniature waterfall from the gutter of my roof. The occasional whipping and snapping movements of the tall tree in my backyard peeked through the window as well. Focusing my attention away from the thundering storm, I had just about finished downloading movies and shows I planned to watch during the power outage on Netflix. I had also taken the effort to download some of my music on Spotify to listen to. They were not too much of a distraction, but they would work in terms of helping me get through this hurricane. As the lights went out for the fifth and final time, I was lying in my bed as I set up my iPad to begin streaming my favorite movie since my childhood: *Surf's Up*. I got as far as the introduction of the main character Cody Maverick and the surfing contest he was striving to compete in before I began noticing the temperature change within my house. It was mildly uncomfortable at first, but I was able to push away the thoughts of my annoyance at it. However, as the temperature began to rise, as did my discomfort. I could no longer even focus on the movie. Deciding to give up on the prospect of watching the movie, I turned off my iPad and rolled over to attempt to get sleep to make the night end faster.

Though, to my demise, sleeping was an endlessly fickle task throughout the entirety of

the night. My body felt as though it were in a limbo state just above discomfort and right below torture. I never thought of how my body might react to being in an environment in which the air felt thick and humid. Unfortunately for me, I had all the hours in the night to contemplate the turmoil of being in said environment when the dreaded hurricane hit. I believe what kept me awake all night was the fact that I simply could not breathe. My lungs felt as though they were clogged with wet tissue whenever I attempted to breathe in air and were only met with pure humidity in its place. No matter how deeply I would breathe in, the crisp, sharp, cool air I had grown accustomed to in my usually-air-conditioned home was nowhere to be found. I felt absolutely miserable. I knew I was not the only one experiencing misery, as my poor dog Gene rushed into my room.

“Are you okay, Bubs?” I gently asked him, lending a hand to pet his head. He whined his dismayed response, terrified from the coming storm. He seemed shaken and terrified, to which I comforted him every now and then by talking to him and scratching his head. He occasionally left my room to repeat the routine with my mother in her room, before returning to mine. Eventually, he settled down and slept in his bed at the end of mine. Throughout the whole exchange, I attempted to sleep as well. I just barely endured the suffering of sweating and labored breathing for a few hours before I was finally lured into a somewhat deep sleep by the sounds of the rain and thunder.

I woke up feeling disheveled and exhausted from barely sleeping the night before. As I yawned and inhaled after waking up, I was ruefully reminded of how humid the air was in my house as my lungs still felt clogged. I dragged myself out of bed and saw my mom and dad filling up some luggage bags in the living room.

“Go pack up some bags, we’re going,” my mom instructed me and continued to inform

me that we were going to find a hotel to stay in for a “night or two”, or to at least take a shower in.

I yelled my response, “Okay!” as I rushed back to my room. I swiftly found my big, red duffel I use for all my overnight stays away from home and packed enough clothes for three days, my skincare products, my toothbrush, and a pair of shoes. I packed underwear and other body-care products into a smaller backpack, and took my black purse I usually tote everywhere with me. I laid all my bags out onto the couch and sat beside them, waiting for my parents to finish packing. Once they did, I put Gene’s leash on him and eventually got my bags as well as him, then myself into my dad’s pickup truck. Once everyone was settled, we were set bound for Gulfport, Mississippi.

During the entirety of the thirty minute drive, I watched the scenery of the aftermath of hurricane Ida unfold as we passed by. Torn down street signs, some completely bent; broken and shredded trees, ripped up billboards, and fallen building signs littered the area all around us. Thankfully enough, the traffic towards Gulfport was extremely minimal in comparison to the backed up traffic we passed up. Eventually we reached the Comfort Inn Hotel right on the outskirts of Gulfport, Mississippi. The three story building genuinely seemed comfortable enough to stay in; anything could have been more comfortable than our house at the moment. After my mom went inside and miraculously got us an available room with two beds, we all started unpacking our luggage from the truck.

I trudged into the hotel, lugging my bags with me while Gene trailed at my feet, and was thankful that most of the tenants were in their own rooms as we reached the elevator inside a mostly empty hallway. I was sure that I looked worse than how I felt. If that was even possible. Not having a shower in almost 48 hours was damaging to my physical stability and my mental

stability. The room was much more accommodating than what I had imagined it might be. Albeit, anything with air conditioning, a shower and WiFi was better than I could hope for. However, the shower was a bit of a struggle. It took me about fifteen minutes to figure out the mechanics of the shower to start it. After I could start it, though, it shrieked out a loud, high pitched noise for the entirety of my shower. If a mouse could scream its lungs out, I imagine that is what it would sound like. The noise grated my ears before I finished up and got dressed in sweatpants and my only hoodie I packed with me.

“I am *exhausted*,” I whined as I plopped myself down next to my mom and my dog on one of the beds. My mother sighed and agreed, before turning out the lamp next to her. The soft glow of the TV in the room illuminated the soundly sleeping figures of my parents and pet sleeping in the beds. I checked the time on my phone before wrapping myself in the blanket on the bed. I turned away from my mom and sighed when I noticed it was 8 p.m. The time had completely slipped away somehow, when all we did was drive and stay in the hotel all day. The last thing I felt or noticed before I began drifting into a desperately needed deep sleep was the comfortably heavy and warm body weight of Gene cuddling into the crook of my bent knees. I closed my eyes and slipped into sleep, silently praying that the day awaiting me would be much kinder and less stressful than the last.

Amelia Brown

Mrs. DeLaune

Yearbook 1

15 September 2021

Hurricane Ida

On August 29, 2021, Hurricane Ida made landfall on the state of Louisiana. Knowing this, our state was in a state of panic because we did not know how bad it would affect our homes or lives. Everyone around the southern area of the state started to evacuate days before to get away from the catastrophic storm. My family and I, which consist of my mom, dad, sister, one dog, and I—right now because my other siblings are in different states—live in Belle Chasse. We have been in this area for about six years now, and it has always been a target for big storms because of the significant flood risk and levees we have. My father is a NOBRA River Boat pilot, a job on the river, so his job got shut down because the river was closed. One of my sisters goes to school in Mobile and had to come home because we were concerned it would hit there severely also. I go to the Academy of Our Lady, and our school got closed due to the bad weather, and we did not know how bad it would affect the school or surrounding areas.

My family and I saw the storm was evolving into a category four hurricane and quickly packed because we were unsure if we wanted to stay or not. We soon decided that our house could stand any impact the storm would cause, so we chose to stay as of August 28. Without realizing that the storm could get stronger and bigger, we soon saw we should not stay. The morning of the storm, around 8 AM, my mother woke me up by shaking me and said, "quickly get dressed and ready to leave. The storm has gotten worse, and we do not want to risk anything." The panic I saw in my parents and sister when I went downstairs with all my things

was scary and heartbreaking. We then packed everything up, got dressed, took all of our valuable belongings, and soon headed on our way. We then got on the road in two different vehicles and decided to start heading to Houston, Texas. My mom and my sister went in the SUV, and my dad and I went in his truck that had his boat attached in case we needed it. What we did not realize was that the storm was hitting earlier than was predicted. On our way to Texas, we got hit by the edge of the hurricane. When we were in the car, we barely could see anything because of the hard rainfall hitting the windshield, and because of having to pull the boat, we could not go fast. The wind was whipping so quickly that we could hear the wind whipping back and forth. It was so hard, and we could feel the truck being pulled and see the boat shaking. My dad said, "we may have to pull over and sit in the storm because I didn't know if we would make it without the wind affecting us." Thankfully, we managed to get out of the hurricane and to an area where it was not hitting, and the winds calmed down a little bit. After getting out of that area, we went to the gas station widely known as Buc-ee's. It was crazy the difference in the weather just one state over was experiencing. In Texas, it was sunny and hot with no clouds in sight with the smell of the grass and gasoline people were filling their cars up with. We then went into Buccee's to get some food since we had to leave in such a hurry. I grabbed a BBQ brisket sandwich and quickly opened it to take a bite which tasted like a combination of sweet, salty, tangy, and spicy.

In Texas, we stayed at the Galleria and saw numerous people there because of the hurricane. When the storm passed, my family and I had to decide if we would go back or not with my dad because he had to get back to work immediately. After all, they called him. He told us, "This is not my decision but the decision that needs to be made." We then decided we would go back also, but we prepared for what we would be bombarded with before we did. We got groceries and supplies outside of Louisiana because we knew there would not be any there. We

then headed back with a car full of supplies, groceries, and a car full of gas. We got to Louisiana around the Laplace area, and to see the damage was very saddening. Everything was flooded, there were trees everywhere, roofs were missing, and people had lost their homes. Hearing the sirens of the emergency trucks and seeing the bright flashes of the lights speeding past me and down the miles-long interstate brought a lot of fear to me. To see my state and cities this damage hurt my family and I's hearts. They said this was just like Hurricane Katrina, and they never imagined it would happen again.

When we arrived home, we saw the neighborhood was flooded with trees everywhere and power poles down. Seeing our home, we realized we had no damage, and just a few trees were blown down. We were very thankful for this, and then we got to picking up the trees and replacing everything that was inside back to its original spots outside. Next, we had to clean our pool, cut trees down, and replace furniture. Cleaning the pool left the strong scent of chlorine and chemicals, and the wet mud smelled musty and unpleasant. After cleaning our yard up, we went and helped the neighbors out. One neighbor had trees down everywhere, but luckily no trees fell on anyone's house. We were all very blessed to see that God protected our homes and neighbors during this awful storm.

In the end, this hurricane showed how everyone could come together as a community and help the neighborhood. It was a scary experience for me because this was the first time I had experienced such a bad hurricane that we had to evacuate because typically, we stay home. Now that the storm is finished, we are all trying to repair our city back to how it was before.

Nguyen 1

Amber Nguyen

Mrs. Delaune

Yearbook 1

24 September 2021

Hurricane Ida

It was during school when I had first heard about the hurricane. I had no significant thoughts about it other than having a bit of excitement for a few days off of school like we usually do during hurricane season. When I looked at the news that day, it showed that the hurricane would be heading straight towards us. However, I shrugged it off because most hurricanes that would head towards Louisiana in the past would always take a turn towards another state, so there was nothing to worry about. As if the world had known about my nonchalant attitude towards the hurricane and wanted me to eat my words, the news had confirmed that the hurricane was certain to hit us head on. To add on to my luck, it was a category 4 hurricane, heading straight towards where I live. As school ended, my parents had decided that it would be best to evacuate to my grandparents' house in Mississippi. I felt worried about how my house would be impacted during the hurricane, so I grabbed my school bag and shoved all my electronics and books in it just in case something happened while I was gone. As I drove off with my family, I hoped to myself that Hurricane Ida wouldn't cause too much damage so I wouldn't have to stay in Mississippi for too long.

During my stay at my grandparents's house, I would regularly check up on my friends who stayed back in Louisiana to get updated on what was happening while I was gone. On the day that Hurricane Ida was supposed to arrive, it started to violently rain at the place I stayed at.

The house would vibrate each time thunder cackled outside. The sound reverberated throughout the house, causing more worry among my family. I felt as if I was the only one that was calm, because compared to the powerful winds and rain that was happening back at home, the rain here was less devastating and only lasted for a few hours. While the storm was happening, I fell asleep to the sounds of the rain pattering against the window of the room I was in. When I awoke, instead of seeing a dark and gloomy sky outside, I was greeted with rays of light from the sun seeping through the curtains of the window.

After the hurricane had passed, my parents decided that we should return back home to clean up around the house. When we arrived, I had already expected the house to be hot due to no power, but I was still unable to tolerate the heat. Just standing in the house would make me feel light-headed. My family and I decided to first clean out the fridge because there would no doubt be rotten food left in there since we left. Upon opening the door, the stench of rotten meat and vegetables filled up my nostrils, causing me to scrunch my nose in disgust. I left my parents to go to my room, because I was curious to see if anything was a mess and needed to be cleaned up. When I opened the door, I was surprised to feel a gush of cold air hit my body, cooling me tremendously. The cool air has been trapped in my room since we evacuated. Closing the door before leaving was the best decision I made in my life. I took this opportunity to lay down on the cold surface of my bed and take a nap. When I woke up, I was drenched in sweat and the taste in my mouth was like I just chewed on sand. My parents had left the door open to check up on me, causing the cool air I had previously trapped to escape. Feeling disgusted with how my clothes stuck onto my body like glue from the sweat, I peeled myself off of the bed to take a cold shower. Since the heat was unbearable to live in, we went back to stay in Mississippi until power returned.

The moment we heard news that the power was fixed at home, I felt overjoyed because it meant things are finally coming back to normal. While driving home, I decided to stay awake this time during the car ride to observe the damages through the window. Many signs had been missing from being blown off, the building near my house was reduced to crumbled bricks, many houses suffered roof damage like my house, and my mailbox was pushed back to the front door of my house. After being away for so long, I was unhappy with the smell of my house upon arrival. It shared the same smell as a cardboard box, which gave me a migraine for a while until I got used to it. Before settling down, we unpacked food from our grandparents' house to restock the fridge, put away the clothes, and set our belongings back in place. I realized that it was the perfect opportunity to finish my school assignments while I still had the week off, but to my disappointment there was no Wi-Fi. Almost towards the end of the week I still had no Wi-Fi, and I lived my life the past few days in boredom and misery. It was almost the start of school again, and when all hope was lost, the three bars on the top corner of my phone had lit up and I spent the rest of my time relaxing even more instead of doing work.