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"I just want this to be over. I just want to go home." — Kelly Bennett, Columbia native
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Lowcountry residents flee Hugo's wrath



This building on King Street in Charleston, where the historic horse-drawn carriages were kept, displays the destruction Hurricane Hugo left in its path as it ripped along South Carolina's coast Thursday.

CHARLES JONES/The Gamecock

Coastal evacuees ride out storm

By KATHY HEBERGER
Staff Writer

Evacuees who poured off I-26 from Charleston to pack Columbia hotels and shelters this past week are wondering if they have a place to call home.

"I just wish I knew what was going on down there," John's Island resident Johari Andika said. "You don't know what to do. All the news about home is so general. They don't tell you what your street looks like or if your house is still there."

Andika and her daughter, Lillie Saint-Fort, visiting from New Jersey, slept on neighboring cots in the Holiday Inn's ballroom Thursday night.

"I'm just glad I could be here with my mother instead of at home worrying about her," Saint-Fort said.

Worrying and wondering are the norm these days for coastal inhabitants waiting for conditions to clear up in the Charleston area. David Zendzian and Chris Grabowski, two of 47 students from the College of Charleston staying in the old Roost this week, said they dread seeing their first floor dorm rooms.

"I threw everything I could into my car, and I chained my bike frame to the building," Zendzian said. "But man... our ceiling isn't even going to be dry. We'll have to throw out our couch mattresses if they're still there."

The people who stayed in Charleston are also a cause of worry. "I noticed a lot of the poorer people still sitting on their porches when we left. Some were starting to head for designated high school shelters. I feel sorry for the people who couldn't get out of town," he said.

Grabowski says he started to panic early Thursday when he wasn't sure about his way out. "Some friends I was supposed to ride with left without me, and I didn't know where to go," he said.

The sparsely furnished old Roost, which has been vacant since the spring, will house the Charleston students until Thursday, or until their dorms have electricity and working sewage systems. "I'm glad I'm here. This is so much better than a gym floor," Grabowski said.

COC student Stephanie Smith, whose parents came to pick her up Friday, agreed that the emergency accommodations at USC were great. "They fed us a lot. We stayed up all night and listened to the radio for news from home," she said.

The coliseum's gym floor was a haven for James Island resident Bernard Elliott and about 900 other evacuees when they arrived Thursday. "It was better than being in Charleston," he said.

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Coliseum volunteers help victims

By HAL MILLARD
Managing Editor

As Hurricane Hugo's torrential rains and brutal winds battered Columbia, a tired Kelly Bennett looked out the door of Carolina Coliseum's Elephant Room and choked back tears.

"I've been trying all night to keep from losing it, to keep from crying," said Bennett, a Columbia native.

Bennett, and others like her, had come to the coliseum to volunteer — to help hundreds of coastal residents fleeing Hugo's wrath. It was an exhausting job.

By the time Hugo's strength had reached full force over Columbia, there were at least 900 frightened, hungry and wet evacuees waiting out the storm in the coliseum.

Hundreds slept on the basketball court in Frank McGuire Arena. The overflow had to sleep in the stands. Stragglers came in a steady stream as the storm's force heightened. In one section of the building, a makeshift ambulatory ward had been set up to care for the elderly and the sick.

Bennett, her eyes tired and her voice soft, said she had been there since 5:30 in the after-

noon. It was now 3:30 in the morning. She was ready for this particular nightmare to be over.

"There was this one girl in a truck; I grabbed her hand. She started telling me about this woman in Charleston. She looked at me and said, 'She's not going to make it out,' and that she would have to ride the hard part through by herself... It's been like that all night," Bennett said, her voice trailing off.

"And it feels like it's going to last a little

See COLISEUM page 2

Campus survives Hugo

By KELLY C. THOMAS
News Editor

USC's Columbia campus appears to have survived Hurricane Hugo with minimal damage, university officials said.

"We were really lucky to escape with as little damage as we did," Vice President for Facilities Planning David Rinker said. The campus recreation facility known as The Bubble sustained the worst damage, according to university reports. "The Bubble was destroyed," Rinker said.

As of yet, no decision has been made as to whether The Bubble, which housed indoor tennis facilities as well as football and soccer practice fields and warm-up areas for athletes, will be rebuilt, he said.

He said the South and West energy plants at USC were out of power, leaving the campus south of Blossom Street without power until late Friday afternoon.

In addition to the damage caused to The Bubble, Hugo blew down trees and tree limbs across campus, especially on the east side, causing minor damage to the roofs of some university buildings and damaging some transformers.

The high winds also broke a few windows on campus, Dean of Student Life Jerry Brewer said.

"I was over in the Bates area, and it was really bad, especially when some of the windows started breaking out and we had to get people out of there," Brewer said. "It (the storm) was something I never want to live through again. I'm just glad everything turned out O.K."

Rinker said no damage cost estimates have been made as of yet. "We've been much too concerned with people up until now."

Persons looking for updated information on USC's status can call 777-8477.



The Bubble, USC's air-inflated indoor sports facility, was destroyed when Hurricane Hugo hit Columbia Thursday night.

TEDDY LEPP/The Gamecock

Columbians join to give relief to storm's victims

By JEFF WILSON
Assistant News Editor

Student organizations, local church and civic groups and Columbia residents joined forces to provide relief for Hurricane Hugo's victims Sunday.

The whole event is being coordinated by Vice President of Student Affairs Dennis Pruitt, local ministries, the Salvation Army and student groups, said Student Government President Marie-Louise Ramsdale. "I called my phone list, and other student leaders called their phone lists, and we got students down to the coliseum to volunteer."

She said more than 40 students volunteered to sort and box clothes and other provisions.

Ken Bush, commanding officer for the Salvation Army, said, "It is almost impossible to estimate as to the quantity of goods. We're hoping that over the next ten days we will get approximately 100,000 pounds of commodities to send to Charleston and other areas like Conway and Sumter. That would be about five tractor-trailer truck loads. These areas were badly hit, and they can use all the assistance we can give them."

The first truckload of supplies will be

loaded at 3:00 p.m. today at the coliseum, he said. If there are not enough provisions at the coliseum to fill a truck, more supplies will be picked up at the Salvation Army office on Assembly Street.

Brad Smith, associate pastor for Spring Valley Presbyterian Church, said, "We have about 25 people here from the Spring Valley Church. The thing that is really amazing is the structure that has formed and the fact that people are just able to give."

People found out about the relief drive through the media and have come out to give in massive numbers, he said.

"It all started as people wanting to help. When I first had the idea for the drive, I talked to Ken Bush from the Salvation Army, and I talked to John Bolin about using the Elephant Room in the coliseum, and he gave us the go ahead," Smith said.

"I then got in contact with Dennis Pruitt about lining up some college students to work with the church youth groups. Dennis got in contact with Marie-Louise, and she got the students to come out and participate. Everybody is doing what they can, and, when you add it together, it is an incredibly huge room full of stuff."



Spring Valley High School student Brooke Provoost wades through the mass of donated clothing in the coliseum's Elephant Room Sunday.

TEDDY LEPP/The Gamecock

Hurricane hits S.C., devastates Charleston

By The Associated Press

CHARLESTON—Hurricane Hugo punched the city of antebellum mansions with full fury and killed at least 12 people in the Carolinas before weakening Friday and trailing off inland to the north.

South Carolina's barrier islands were also hit hard as houses were blown off their foundations and boats were pushed ashore, stacked along the beaches two and three deep.

"Garden City for all practical purposes is gone," said M. L. Love, a Horry County administrator who toured the elite resort community near Myrtle Beach.

President Bush declared seven counties a federal disaster area.

"It is the worst storm, the worst disaster, I've ever seen anywhere," said Gov. Carroll Campbell.

Eleven of the U.S. deaths were in South Carolina, said Warren Hardy of the state's Office of Emergency Preparedness. The South Carolina deaths included an elderly man found in the rubble of a house in Charleston and a power

company employee who was electrocuted Friday as he worked to restore electricity. In North Carolina, a 6-month-old baby was killed in Union County when a tree fell on a house.

Charleston was clobbered with 135 mph winds and a tidal surge of 12 to 17 feet. The storm, which at its height was as large as the state of South Carolina, flattened 30 buildings, peeled off roofs and flooded streets.

"There's just destruction everywhere," said Mayor Joseph P. Riley, who imposed a 6 p.m. curfew. He called it a "disaster of extraordinary dimensions."

Riley estimated damage at \$1 billion in the city of 65,000 residents.

National Guardsmen patrolled streets, and Campbell confirmed there was sporadic looting before authorities restored order.

At least 900,000 people were without power in the Carolinas, officials said.