

ELON

## Lifestyle

## Katrina

## hits home

*Elon students affected by the disastrous hurricane on the Gulf Coast*

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In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where the best news is still bittersweet, Kelly Murtagh can only be relieved that her family in New Orleans safely evacuated from the storm.

Their homes, though, were submerged.

"From what we've heard we think that probably all of my family's houses are under water," Murtagh said.

Murtagh, an Elon freshman, is one of many people on this campus who spent nervous days waiting for word about loved ones who lived in the path of Katrina.

As Hurricane Katrina plowed through the Gulf Coast it took with it houses,

roads, buildings, and everything else in its path.

According to USA Today the number of Hurricane Katrina victims in Red Cross shelters is up to 45,000 and growing. If

this is true, Katrina could be one of the deadliest hurricanes in over a century.

Elon, like most other places, has experienced some loss from the natural disaster. Many students either know someone or are from the damaged areas. Students interviewed said their immediate families evacuated and were accounted for.

"I have grown up in Louisiana my entire life," Murtagh said. "It has so much personality and culture, and I am so disturbed by all of the turmoil going on down there."

Her extended family, from New Orleans, was evacuated to their home in Baton Rouge which is above sea level and relatively safe during hurricanes.

Murtagh says she is very appreciative of the relief efforts and hopes to rebuild. She is glad to know her family is safe. "You can replace things, but you cannot replace people."

Many families will have to relocate to other parts of the country. Sophomore Phil Collins was devastated to hear of

the tragedy his aunt and uncle from New Orleans have suffered.

"They lost everything—their home, their cars and all their belongings," sophomore Phil Collins said. "They have not gone back to New Orleans yet, but they are moving to New York until they are able to sort things out in Louisiana."

Mississippi has also sustained a great deal of damage. "There was not an evacuation order for central Mississippi, so everyone was at home," sophomore Kimberly Cote said. "Everything shut down so that people could be at home. Most businesses were shut down for the rest of the week."

Vicksburg, Cote's town, was powerless for about 48 hours. Trees, power lines, telephone poles, and cellular phone towers

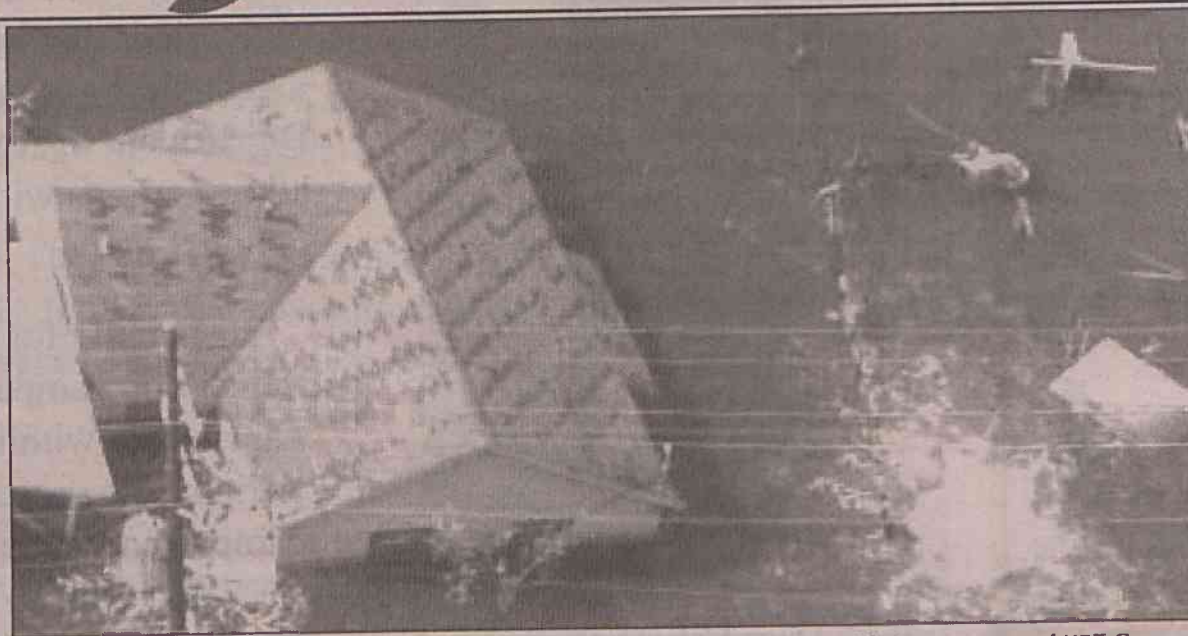
all fell due to winds. This made it very hard to get into contact with family

and friends. "However, the damage my family and friends suffered is hardly worth mentioning compared to what happened to people on the Gulf Coast and in New Orleans," Cote said.

Also, because of the power outages, gas is even more limited there. "Someone told me physical fights broke out over gas. People are not allowed to fill up their tanks; they can only get a certain amount" Cote said.

Cote wants to thank Elon University for being so supportive to the people affected by this terrible tragedy. "Students, faculty, and staff have worked hard to start relief efforts for the victims of Hurricane Katrina," Cote said. "I just want to thank everyone who is giving money and time to help people who have lost everything they have."

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Photos courtesy of KRT Campus

Officials said relief supplies were finally flowing smoothly, order was being restored and even a sense of normalcy was beginning to take root.

