

Ike and Gustav devastate

by Ben Rosenberg
Sports Editor

On Aug. 25, Americans sat anxiously fearing another Hurricane Katrina. It was on this day that a dreaded cyclone called Gustav began forming off the southeast coast of Haiti. By the morning of Aug. 26, Gustav had become a full-blown hurricane, and by Sept. 4, a more deadly Hurricane Ike followed.

Predicted to strike on Sept. 1, meteorologists concluded that Gustav had approximately an 81 percent chance of remaining a category three hurricane or above. When Gustav struck along the Louisiana coast, however, it was confirmed as a category two. The hurricane reached a high speed of 150 miles-per-hour, whereas Gustav was only one mile-per-hour below qualifications for category three when it hit. As the storm began subsiding, several tornadoes swept across the area.

We [do not] have more tales of people in grave danger and more loss of life...because everybody heeded the governor's instructions, the mayor's instructions, [and] the parish president's instructions to get out of town," said Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security. Local residents are optimistic that future incidents will run as smoothly. It is estimated that Gustav will cost insurance agencies a total of about ten billion dollars, while costing a total of 20 billion to the US government.

Hurricane Ike also hit the US mainland, and had a profound effect on Cuba and Haiti, which had already suffered from both hurricanes Gustav and Hanna. At that point, Ike was a category four hurricane, but by the time it reached the mainland, it had spread to a much wider radius

and subsequently had weakened. Storms and floods swept across the southern states, forcing Texas to shut down several of its oil refineries, and it further delayed Louisiana citizens from returning after Gustav.

Damages from Ike are projected to cost the US government approximately 22 billion dollars, ranking it third among America's costliest hurricanes, behind Katrina and Andrew in 2005 and 1992 respectively. Though Ike was not as costly to mainland America as Gustav, which ranked sixth, it will retain its fame in the US because it marked the first instance in 25 years that Texas was hit by a damaging hurricane.

As of Sept. 4, Gustav had dissipated and resulted in 120 casualties, while Ike dissipated by Sept. 14, killing 147. Though these events were traumatic, they were no match for Katrina, which single-handedly caused over 18,000 casualties. A category five hurricane, Katrina had a catastrophic impact on both the state of Louisiana and the national economy. Although Gustav and Ike were nowhere near the magnitude of Katrina, the hurricanes occurred at almost exactly the same time of year. Three years ago, Katrina began forming on Aug. 23, just two days before Gustav, though it dissipated by Aug. 30, a day before Ike began to form.

Summertime has been dangerous for Louisiana and its bordering areas for the past few years. Hopefully, however, our response will continue to improve if events like these continue to occur. From what we have seen this summer, between Gustav, Hanna, and Ike, Americans can expect more of these deadly cyclones in the future. (Sources: www.cbs11tv.com, CNN, news.nationalgeographic.com)



STORMS: Gulf coast of Texas damaged after Ike and Gustav.

Bartering affects economy

by Kylie Webb
Humor Editor

Through the bartering system, items ranging all the way from school uniforms, college tuitions, breast implants to a horse have been acquired. As the US economy continues to worsen, citizens are finding alternate ways to obtain both necessities and luxuries.

Many Americans who are currently affected by the rising gas and food prices have found ways to trade their skills. If a carpenter needs to see a doctor, for example, he might help the doctor build something in exchange for an appointment. This way no money changes hands. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group explained that "a couple of years ago, many Americans had \$500 to spend at the end of the month, but that

Barter businesses have been in operation for a long time and have molded to the needs of those participating as the popularity increases. There was a system created using 'barter credits' which serve as a kind of money. This way if a worker is in need of another's skills, but there is no demand for the

Barter businesses... have molded to the needs of those participating as the popularity increases.

skills the other offers, they can still get what they need by using a credit they formerly earned, as long as it is all within the network.

These systems of bartering and trading have been very effective in improving the lives of many US citizens. "Really, there are no limits to it. We trade for just about anything you can think of" explained Michael Krane, president of Green Apple Barter Services in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This system of trading instead of using money offers many more opportunities to financially struggling Americans. Jessica Hardwick, SwapThing founder and CEO says she thinks "a few years ago it was

As the US economy continues to worsen, citizens are finding alternate ways to obtain both necessities and luxuries.

money has evaporated because of rising prices." It is therefore not surprising that people are starting to get creative in their ways of coping with the rapidly changing economy.

The system of bargaining is helping many working class US citizens manage with the high prices of essential items. It is also helping them acquire luxuries. One woman from Louisiana, Miriam Brown, managed to plan a trip to Cape Cod without having to pay for room and board. She posted an advertisement on the barter section of Craig's list offering to trade her accounting skills and her husband's ability for home repairs in exchange for room and board in Cape Cod, and was successful.

Many Americans... affected by the rising gas and food prices have found ways to trade their skills.

more for fun," but today bartering is becoming a way for people to survive.

California's water crisis

by Madeleine Wills
National Editor

As the country's focus turns to the 2008 presidential election, California's issues seem to fade into the background. The widespread fires this past spring and summer brought some attention back to California, but a situation no less destructive still lingers: prolonged drought in the state.

The fact that 2008 had one of the driest springs on record for Northern California means that if these dry conditions continue until 2009, California could be facing its worst drought ever.

There are three main sources from which California gets its water, all of which are in jeopardy: the Sierra Nevada snowpack; the Colorado River Basin; and California's own water-storage system, dams and reservoirs which hold the majority of the rainwater. Due to multiple natural causes including global warming, the state can barely rely on the snowpack. Scientists predict about twenty-five to forty percent of the snowpack to be falling as rain, and therefore suggest California improve its reservoirs and other storage systems so that the state can capture as much rain as possible without having to face the potential of flooding.

This, in turn, means a cut in employment as well as higher competition for the crops that are still being produced.

Furthermore, because of decreased rainfall, the levels in reservoirs throughout the state have

dropped to as much as fifty percent of their capacity, the lowest levels in 30 years. And now due to the near extinction of multiple species of fish in the Colorado River Basin and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, new restrictions have been placed on the amount of water that can be pumped out, further reducing supplies by twenty to thirty percent.

This means not only drastic changes for our environment, but it also means changes for our economy. All of the water restrictions have had a domino effect on

employment and food prices. Farmers have already stopped using thousands of acres of agricultural land because they cannot water it. This, in turn, means a cut in employment as well as higher competition for the crops that are still being produced.

Stephen Patricio, a California farmer, said he expects to have to eliminate over 400 jobs, laying off over 2,400 individual workers, including everyone from truck drivers to tractor operators and repairmen. Patricio claimed, "Ninety percent of farms need to be financed, and lenders have made it clear that without a water plan, there is no money for 2008 crops."

Governor Schwarzenegger has consistently proposed plans to help solve our water problems. His Bay Delta Conservation Plan will require a lot of cooperation between environmental organizations and federal agencies but the benefits will largely outweigh the difficulties. Overall, its goal is "to improve water storage, quality, conveyance and conservation to both protect our environment and reliably meet the demands of agriculture, cities, homes, businesses, and industry."

California has been faced with a huge issue to solve but investing in water conservation now will ensure a reliable water supply into the future. (Sources: San Jose Mercury News, Los Angeles Times, The Christian Science Monitor)



DROUGHT: Water levels drop to lowest in over 30 years.



REGULATIONS: Farmer adjusts his sprinklers.

Candidates on Immigration

by Mercedes Beach
Graphic Designer

While the economy is currently the main focus of the Presidential Election of 2008, illegal immigration remains a prominent issue. McCain and Obama both view immigration as a continuous problem that needs to be addressed and further reformed. Both candidates support a path to legalization for all immigrants. McCain focuses on illegal immigration's effects on our national security, while Obama stresses that many illegal immigrant families are already integrated into our nation and cannot simply be deported.

Today, there are approximately 12 million undocumented, illegal immigrants living in the United States, with the highest population of illegal immigrants living in California. Many of them are employed and contribute to our everyday economy; however, these illegal immigrants cause the state to lose over ten billion dollars annually through schools and healthcare. In recent times, initiatives have been taken to reduce the flow of illegal border crossings and their impact on our country.

Immigration has been a long-standing issue, but during the past year, President George W. Bush has enforced immigration laws more aggressively than other recent administrations. He proposed initiatives to heavily increase border patrolling, which included hiring more Border Patrol agents and detaining more people in the process of border crossing. Bush's proposals specifically target and deport illegal immigrants who are fugitives running from deportation, committing crimes, or involving themselves in street gangs.

Under Bush's new initiatives, many more people face the consequences of immigrating illegally. In fact, the number of illegal immigrant federal prosecutions has increased nearly 400 percent from 2000-2001, to around 800 cases annually in South-

ern California alone. These cases result in two to three years of detainment in a federal prison, then deportation.

The number of illegal immigrants in the US has declined 11 percent between August 2007 and May 2008, some driven out due to fear of being captured. This fear has spread to children, who do not attend school for fear of their parents being deported. As the current administration cracks down on illegal immigration, attention to future immigration plans grows.

Focus on the Presidential candidates' positions becomes increasingly prevalent as the election looms. The candidates' views on immigration policies and their plans for maintaining border control in the future vary, but both plan to reform current programs.

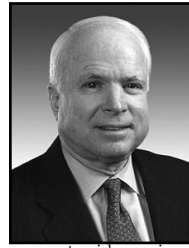
McCain hopes to "dispose of the issue of 12 million people who are in this country illegally." He supports offering legal residency and scholarships to illegal immigrants seeking higher education and he frequently discusses the effect of immigration on national security and the economy.

Obama focuses on keeping families together and children of illegal immigrants in schools. He believes in offering new paths towards legalization through sponsorship of programs encouraging citizenship. He hopes to "avoid the hundreds of people who have been dying across the desert" and regulate immigration with more efficiency and order.

McCain and Obama agree to reform current initiatives through instigating a path for illegal immigrants to gain legal status, forming a temporary workers program, and improving border security. (Sources: www.CNN.com, www.NYTimes.com, About)



courtesy barackobama.com



courtesy john-mccain.com