

Northside Opinions: KATRINA: THE AFTERMATH: NORTHSIDE READERS RESPOND

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Byline: SUSAN BENTZEN-GORDET, ALBIN F. TURBAK, ROB ROPER, D.A. KING

Body

Thousands are here, many need help

It is heartbreaking and depressing to watch news of what Hurricane **Katrina** caused. This has made me thankful for family, friends and everything I have, including my job, electricity and clean running water.

This tragedy has motivated me to act. My husband and I have donated to www.hsus.org for the Humane Society disaster relief fund to rescue the thousands of pets left behind.

We've donated to other relief organizations, including our Unity church, which helped a Unity church in Houston feed survivors there.

There are thousands of hurricane survivors who have been brought to the metro area, and they are still coming.

Please donate your items and time to a local Red Cross shelter, the Salvation Army or MUST Ministries. If you have the time and inclination, please go and offer to volunteer. Give blood if you can. Many places are overwhelmed and need your help.

SUSAN BENTZEN-GORDET, Marietta

Citizens need help that goes to illegals

We now have a situation where American citizens are being denied rights because illegal immigrants are straining our resources.

The hurricane victims are being unnecessarily harassed because we already have our hospitals, schools and help agencies full of illegal immigrants who are occupying hospital beds and school seats.

How stupid can a country be, or how greedy can politicians be, to let this happen?

The number of hurricane evacuees is nothing compared with the millions of illegal immigrants now being housed, schooled and given medical care for free.

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Maybe it's time our officials declared that illegal acts will not be tolerated and cleared the decks so that American citizens might have a better life.

Dr. ALBIN F. TURBAK, Sandy Springs

Warning of disaster came both decades, hours before storm hit

I have listened to the outpouring of suffering and been touched by the grief and frustration.

The groundwork was laid for a disaster in New Orleans over many decades. Necessary work wasn't done to help prevent it. It was not a question of "if"; it was always a question of "when."

That said, I am truly embarrassed by the lack of response by our federal government, which must have known what kind of disaster was looming at least 12 hours before it happened. Anyone watching the Weather Channel surely knew.

The pictures of bodies floating in the streets, the scenes of hundreds of square blocks of homes flooded, are emotionally draining. I've said many prayers for the victims. And, I won't deny, I've ended many of those prayers with thanks that my family and our home are, at least for now, safe.

ROB ROPER, Marietta

GANGS: Welcome to Georgiafornia

The Mara Salvatrucha gang and their rivals in violent crime, the 18th Street Gang --- until recently an affliction of California's illegal immigration catastrophe --- now have spray-painted "tags" on several Cherokee County bridges over I-575, one only 500 yards from where my wife works each day.

Many of these gang members are also illegal aliens. Many have been deported previously.

Absent secure borders and the promised protection of the federal government, we are watching as our state government labels it a "federal problem" and does nothing while we slide into becoming "Georgiafornia."

No one needed to ask if gangs were a problem here even five years ago. What will we be asking five years from now?

D.A. KING, Marietta

King is president of the Dustin Inman Society, a coalition of citizens with the goal of educating the Georgia public on illegal immigration. On the Web: www.thedustininmansociety.org.

Graphic

MATT ROURKE / Cox News Service Evacuee Shelia Dixon tells tiny daughter Emily that "regardless of what this looks like, this isn't the end." ; Graffiti painted by gang members is a new and disturbing element in Cherokee County, a **reader** says.

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