Hurricane Katrina
Gunter Library’s Experience

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IAMSLIC: Changes on the Horizon
The 33rd IAMSLIC Annual Conference
and 17th Annual SAIL Meeting
October 7-11, 2007
Sarasota, Florida, U.S.A.
My Grandparent’s Home in West Gulfport Built in 1902

Photo taken 6 March 2006
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

Pre-Katrina Aerial View

Post-Katrina Aerial View
The Road to the Laboratory

Getting to the campus meant climbing over the debris from destroyed homes.
Sign at the entry of campus
South Side of the Campus Pre-Katrina
South Side of Campus Post-Katrina
The walk up the hill toward the library was grim.
A tree limb smashed the glass in a front door. The hurricane winds blew the pictures out of the frames. Water entered through several doors.
30 in. (72.1 cm) of storm surge flooded the hallways of the Caylor Building leading to the Library.
Our hurricane procedure did not include preparing for a 24 foot (7.3 meters) storm surge. The building is 21 ft (6.4 m) above sea level.
Computers are bagged in plastic and moved away from a wall of windows facing north as part of the hurricane procedures.
Debris, water height lines, and books in the marsh muck were found throughout the library.
Marsh muck is slippery and sticky.
Books were either thrown off the shelves into the muck or compacted through expansion.
Books molded in the hot, humid environment.
Water caused all metal cabinets to rust.
Mold and muck filled all library spaces. We found a marsh snake & a turtle.
Where do you start?
Standing in the muck, library staff conferred about our recovery plans.
Books had been wet for 13 days by the time a recovery company arrived.
The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries had a contract with Blackmon Mooring Steamatic. They arrived Saturday, 10 September at 6:30 pm.
Using salvaged furniture, BMS Contractors helped set up a temporary library reference desk in the building’s portico.
We were not alone in trying to salvage what we could.
Employees and students worked 12+ hours a day every day for over a month.
Cross the hall from the library, the computer lab had 20 in. (51 cm.) of storm surge.
Library furnishings and equipment joined auditorium seating outside the building in the debris piles.
Within days the entire coast looked as if someone had set fire to everything (September 2005)
Using what we could find, clean, and save, we were back in our space by late October, but with contractors working around us.
New Circulation Desk 2008
Back in service—Post Katrina
Gunter Library Staff

- Marjie Williams, library technical assistant, compiled all the lists of materials lost to the storm surge. Williams says she will never stay for a hurricane again having survived Hurricanes Camille (1969) and Katrina (2005)
Gunter Library staff

- Cathy Schloss, interlibrary loan assistant, lost her home in Escatawpa, MS, (nearly 70 miles/112.6 km.) east of Hurricane Katrina’s landfall. She and her husband lived for two years in an RV while rebuilding. They returned home in August 2007.
People who helped

- Heather Ferguson, a graduate student studying benthic ecology, shoveled muck, put plastic on shelves, & wiped mildew off books and bound journals. After graduating in 2006, she and her husband joined the Peace Corp and are serving in Romania.
People who helped

• Howard Newby, a long-time geology technician was assigned to help the library. Mr. Newby retired from the lab in 2006 and works as a greeter at a local Wal-Mart.
People who helped

- Brian Joachim, Botany greenhouse assistant, helped salvage furniture and was our supplies “runner.” Brian is “keeping it green” with our GCRL landscaping crew.
People who helped

- Adrienne Russell Flowers, a PhD student in Marine Microbiology, offered conservation tips, shoveled muck, and documented the damage. She is continuing her dissertation research.
People who helped

• Betty Shaw, a Katrina Relief Worker from the South MS Regional Development Commission, worked part-time from April 2006-May 2007 in the library. Her office furniture business received 5 ft (1.5 m) of storm surge. She is now an archival assistant at a Gulfport architectural firm.
We were blessed in our recovery efforts by several major donors

Rotary International Zones 29 & 30
Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund
Rotary awards Katrina grant to Southern Miss Marine Library

OCEAN SPRINGS—The marine library at the University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) is taking another step toward recovery from Hurricane Katrina with the help of a $35,000 grant from Rotary International.

The grant to the Gunter Library was received last week from the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund established by the Rotary Zones 29-30 that include Mississippi, Alabama and 10 other states.

Joyce M. Shaw, head librarian at GCRL, said the funds will help replace library equipment and furniture destroyed by more than a foot of storm surge from Hurricane Katrina. In spite of the loss of filing cabinets, computers, study tables, desks, chairs, photocopy machine and reference classes resumed on the GCRL campus three weeks after the storm.

“Gunter Library is one of the few special libraries for marine sciences in the entire nation, and it is an asset to Southern Miss,” said Edward G. McCormack, interim librarian. “We are determined to preserve and maintain the materials in it and are very grateful for this grant.”

Local sponsor for the recovery project is the Rotary Club of Ocean Springs where Shaw is a member and on the club’s board of directors. The grant is part of more than $3 million that the Rotary fund has provided to libraries, schools, not-for-profits and charitable organizations for Katrina recovery in the disaster area.

“GCRL is part of the university’s School of Ocean With help from Rotary International, University of Southern Mississippi faculty and staff Dr. Jeffrey M. Lotz, coastal sciences chair (right), Joyce M. Shaw, head librarian of the Gunter Library at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, and Edward G. McCormack, interim university librarian, say goodbye to cardboard boxes serving as filing cabinets in the Ocean Springs facility post-Katrina. Shaw displays the $35,000 hurricane relief check given by Rotary International.
National Network of Libraries of Medicine
Southeastern Atlantic Region
Katrina Relief Award
2005-06
National Network of Libraries of Medicine SE/A Grant

- Two IBM® Desktop Computers
- Canon Scanner
- Five (5) Microbiology Reference Books
SOLINET Academic Library Hurricane Recovery Project funded by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Collection losses at Gunter Library
• Parts or all of 138 serial titles (A-C)
• More than 1,200 books
• Nearly 3,000 reprints, reports, grey literature
• Archival copies of GCRL publications
In April 2007 we traveled to Sutton Books in Williamsburg, KY, to purchase replacement books as part of the SOLINET Academic Library Hurricane Recovery Project.
The recovery at home continued, too.
The backyard shed did not survive. The pool was filled with debris and harbor water.
The tree was removed and a blue roof installed.
We acquired a new family member, Katrina, who arrived at our door a day after the storm.
There is more to recovery than bleach, buckets, and rags!

- NNLM SE/A Emergency Planning Taskforce
- IAMSLIC Disaster Taskforce
- SOLINET
  - Risk Management Seminar
  - Hurricane Preparedness Workshop
  - Gulf Coast Academic Library Recovery Project: The Business Side of Recovery
Questions!