

from our viewpoint...

# Katrina images different from 9/11

Four years ago, our country was reeling from the impact of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

That tragedy brought us to the realization we were not immune to the violence that had plagued other parts of the world.

Today we are reeling from another disaster. This time Mother Nature reached out and swatted the Gulf Coast with hurricane Katrina to remind us of her ability to inflict widespread destruction.

In both cases, emergency crews responded to the disasters, but there was a difference.

For the terrorist attacks, the country not only mobilized rescue efforts, but there was a genuine feeling that our national honor had been crumpled with the falling of the twin towers and explosion at the Pentagon.

The focus of the nation was on New York and Washington. The damage, while horrific, was contained to a much smaller area than the path of Katrina.

Americans of all ages were affected by the images from GroundZero in New York. Many can tell you what they were doing when they heard the news that an airplane had slammed into the twin towers. These were instants of history that will be remembered and retold.

For those who were trying to sit out Katrina, the hours will be remembered, but for the nation it is not an instant to be remembered but an incident, which has longer and larger consequences than the terrorist attacks.

New Orleans has captured the nation's focus as that Southern city copes with the disaster, and the aftermath of the flood. For those who have lived through a flood and had to clean up the mud, the scenes in New Orleans are heart rending. It's somewhat incomprehensible that people would want to return to that city and rebuild.

Back east, the Pentagon has been rebuilt and a new building will stand where the twin towers were in New York. The American spirit is indomitable, and we are sure much of the Gulf Coast will be rebuilt in the years to come.

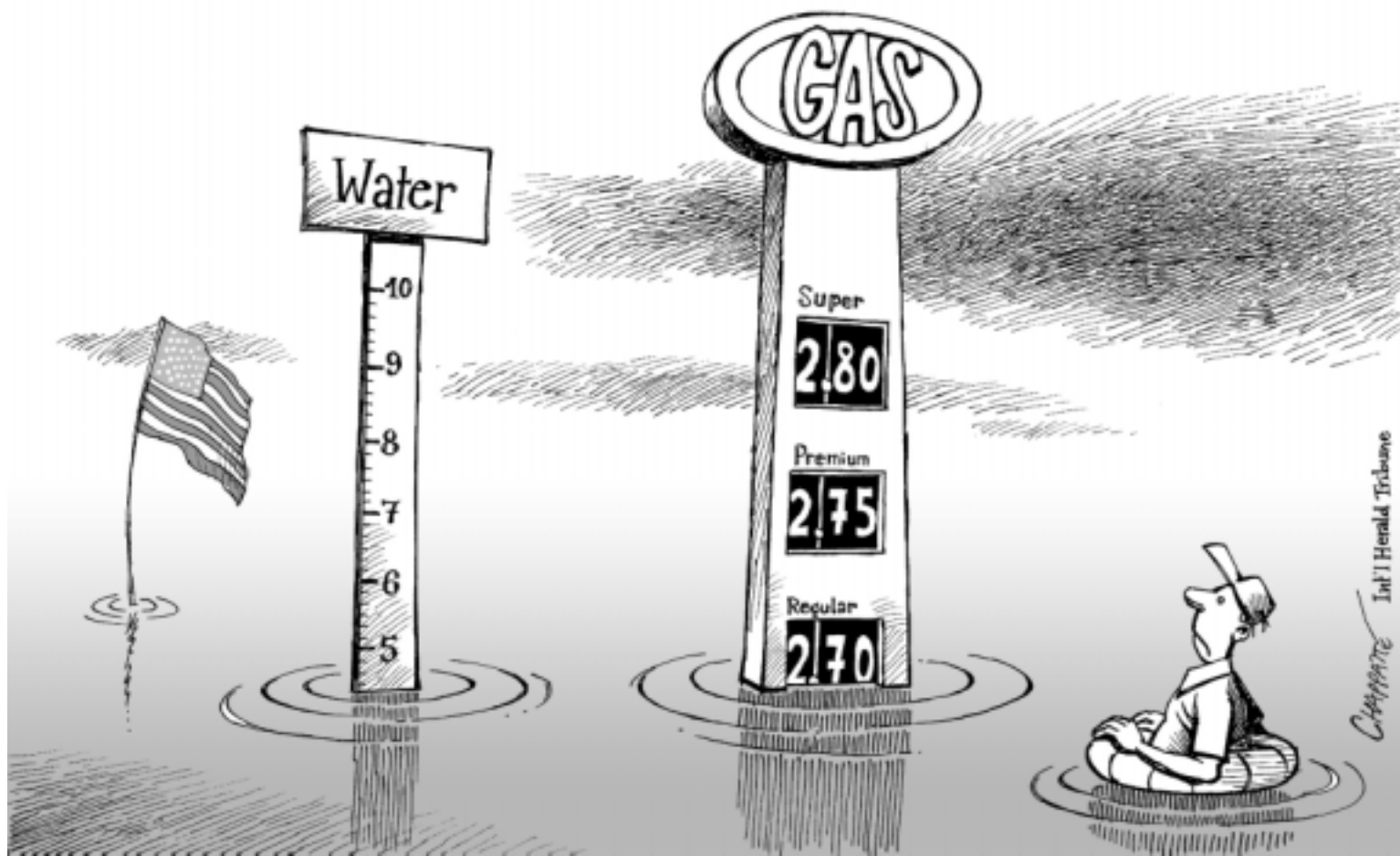
So far it appears the death toll will fall far short of last week's dire predictions. Some areas of the City of Jazz are going to bounce back in good shape, but in some of the northern areas of the city where the worst flooding was, the cleanup is going to take much longer.

Thousands of people are being welcomed by cities in this state and others with food and shelter to help them find ways to survive and rebuild their lives. For many, there is nothing to return to, and even if they could return, it will be many weeks or months before that can happen.

As the cleanup and reconstruction begin, there will be a surge in jobs for people willing to work, and the need for construction workers and materials will put a strain on other parts of the country.

There will be bright days ahead for New Orleans and Biloxi, Miss., and as the event fades in the memory of the country, the new buildings will help erase some of the sadness and pain of the misery Katrina caused.

Maybe four years from now, when the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 comes around again, there can be a quiet moment remembering the destruction and terror of Katrina. In the meantime, every dollar given to the American Red Cross will help the victims of this awful storm. — Tom Betz



# Pulling weeds relieves frustration of waiting

Grab. Yank. Pull.  
“Why isn’t he ever on time?”  
“Why do I always have to wait?”  
“We’re going to be late, again.”  
“Doesn’t he think my time is as valuable as his?”



**cynthia haynes**  
• open season

Grab, yank, pull. Mutter.  
For some reason, Steve and I can never be ready to go to anything at the same time. This includes going home after work, going to dinner, leaving on a trip. You name it, one of us is always ready and tapping his or her foot as the other wanders around doing some last-minute, have-to chore.

For many years, we almost didn’t get out of the office at all.

When he’d finish up his editing and was ready to go, I was still doing payroll, so he went back to his office to write a column. I’d finish payroll, but he was still writing, so I’d start on my editing. I was editing as he finished his column, so he would start on ... and so it went for

an hour or more until one of us got so hungry we started chewing on the other.

I finally figured out a way to vent both my frustrations and do a job that can be stopped at any time.

I weed.  
I go outside and start pulling grass and weeds out of the driveway or garden. At the office, I pull weeds from flower boxes and from the cracks in the sidewalk.

I don’t do this with good grace, mind you. I do it with much muttering and frustration.

Even as I mutter to myself that we’re always late and it’s always his fault, I know it’s not true. Still, it relieves the frustration of waiting.

I’m not good at waiting.

My new plan seems to be working. Since I’m not off doing some project that just has to be finished when Steve is done, we’re done when he’s done. We can leave.

This gets us home to supper a lot sooner. We don’t seem to get to eat any earlier but we get home sooner.

If we are leaving the house, we get wherever we’re supposed to go sooner.

And it has two added bonuses. The garden, flower beds, driveway and sidewalks get weeded.

And it’s good exercise. Those weeds don’t come out without a struggle.

So if you see me out on the sidewalk giving a weed the what-for, you’ll know that Steve is still in the house or office doing whatever.

I’m just not sure what I’m going to do when winter arrives and the only thing left to pull out is my hair.

# Questions: Cindy Sheehan — peace mom

**Raging Moderate, By Will Durst**

Q. So who exactly is this Peace Mom woman anyway?

A. Cindy Sheehan is a 48 year old from Vacaville, California, who, in response to losing her son Casey in Iraq is selfishly attempting to horde the honor of being a Gold Star mother all to herself.

Q. What?  
A. She’s against the war.

Q. Oh, OK, so why the hell is she hunkered down in a ditch outside the Texas White House bothering the president during his vacation?

A. Vacation? 35 days is not a vacation. 35 days is a sabbatical. 35 days is a retreat. It’s five weeks. 36 hours short of a tenth of a year. Longer than the gestation period of most mammals. Where’s my 35 day vacation? Where’s your 35 day vacation? Where’s the American public’s 35 day vacation?

Q. Good point, but that wasn’t the question.  
A. I’m sorry, got a bit worked up there. What was the question again?

Q. What’s she doing there?  
A. She’s been camped outside the president’s ranch to meet with him and she vows to stay until he tells her exactly what noble cause her son died for. And she doesn’t want to hear “Operation 2 Bucks A Gallon.”

Q. Wouldn’t you think a president this media-savvy would just invite her inside for some cookies and lemonade and get it over with?

A. My theory is he’s spent too much time grilling cheese sandwiches on the hood of his pickup, and might be suffering from heat stroke. Besides, what kind of a man takes his family to Crawford, Texas, for a vacation?

Q. Are you saying West Texas in August is not what you call your garden spot?

A. I’m saying it’s real similar to hell and that’s assuming hell has winged insects the size of footstools.

Q. How has the conservative media responded?

A. You mean the right wing smear machine?  
Q. Whatever.  
A. Bill O’Reilly jumped on Ms. Sheehan like



**from other pens**  
• commentary

a gorilla stomping the air out of an inflatable life raft in order to fit in the back of an overstuffed Cadillac Escalade.

Q. Any specific accusations?

A. You could say that. You could also say porcupine pelts make substandard day care pillows. Cindy Sheehan has been accused of everything from unpaid parking tickets to the ultimate treasonous act — association with Michael Moore. Won’t be long before rumors of a lesbian relationship with Hillary Clinton emerge.

Q. What about the claims that Ms. Sheehan has become a tool of the left?

A. A tool of the left? That’s a laugh. Fox News calling Cindy Sheehan a political tool.

A lot like a rattlesnake calling a scorpion noxious. Or a White House official complaining about the smearing of Karl Rove. You can’t make stuff up like this.

Q. Any comment on the criticisms that the protest has morphed from a lonely vigil into pretty much just another gathering of the usual suspects?

A. Last I looked, Jesse Jackson hadn’t yet made an appearance.

Q. Ms. Sheehan has been called away due to a family sickness. How will her absence affect the impact of her vigil?

A. Not much, besides, with gas approaching three bucks a gallon, I wouldn’t be surprised if a parading convoy of SUV owners pitching gravel into each other’s windshields took her place.

Political comic Will Durst wonders if Crawford, Texas, has any decent barbecue. And if they deliver. Durst has performed around the world and is a familiar pundit on television. E-mail Will at [willdurst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:willdurst@sbcglobal.net).

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