



South Bay Communities Alliance Alabama Port – Delta Port – Heron Bay – Mon Luis – Sans Souci, Alabama
 7385 Highway 188, Coden, AL., tel. 251 232-0135

“The hurricane-damaged communities in Alabama are the most overlooked areas by the U.S. Government and are not mentioned in the U.S. Government’s reports to the UN Human Rights Committee ...

‘Coden has never seen so many people pass away in such a short time... trying to survive in the [formaldehyde emitting] FEMA campers, and hoping to see their homes rebuilt. Paul Nelson’ ”

(April 16, 2010 report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council by Advocates for Environmental Human Rights and The Gulf States Human Rights Working Group -Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, USA).

*** Memoriam for Alabama Katrina Victims, with tragic update, provided below by Paul Nelson, President South Bay Communities Alliance**

“...at least 438 applicants who desperately need assistance. They call daily...soon we will be forced to tell them there will be no more assistance...” (Feb. 22, 2010 Mobile County Commission letter, reiterated March 23, 2010). [These families qualified for federal assistance in 2007, and are mostly impoverished single parents or grandparents caring for minor children and disabled family members, see p. 7 of cited report.]

For Neglected Katrina Survivors & Victims from the Bayou Communities through the Black Belt Counties of Alabama

US State Dept. Wants Input from Alabama for its Report on UN Human Rights

April 22, Thursday, Grace Episcopal Church, 5712 First Ave. North, Birmingham, AL, 9 am – 4:30pm

Free Transportation (thanks to Resist of Boston, Ma.) Call: (251) 232-0135. If you can't make it to B'ham please give us your statement/photos.



Phyllis Johnson, of Snows Quarters, and her two children suffered in this Katrina damaged home over 4 yrs. She met in Speaker Pelosi’s office with the Gulf Coast Civic Works Campaign, South Bay, and AL Arise. <http://www.alarise.org/dctrip.htm>. She now is getting extensive repairs and says: “I’ll be in B’ham and speak for hundreds of others who are still suffering like we did.”

Coden folks, members of Bayou La Batre’s Black Community of Snows Quarters, and State official Bobby Cunningham show their support to **Becky Barbour, disabled and still languishing in the FEMA camper** where her husband died – next to now empty lot where they had a home for 36 yrs. Becky’s friend’s home (far left) received assistance, see: ‘Uneven Gulf Recovery’ NPR Morning Edition 09 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112257238>)

The Federation of Southern Coops and Gulf Coast Fund/Rockefeller Philantopies have raised \$10,000 for a FEMA cottage for Ms. Barbour. To donate contact: Stephanie Bosarge at 251 232-0135



Virgil Presley’s Katrina damaged floors in Snows Quarters Bayou La Batre. Mr. Presley, who is deaf, signed at the Jan. New Orleans UPR: “Who will help me?”-----



Rosie Robbins of Snows Quarters points to the mold constantly growing in her vents. “My home needs elevation to get us away from the mold. I’ve testified in Speaker Pelosi’s office, New Orleans, and I’m coming to Birmingham to testify again for my family and all Katrina Survivors. “FEMA conducted an inspection and is now requiring elevation of 100 homes rehabilitated by volunteer groups.” (Testimony on behalf of Gov. Riley http://financialservices.house.gov/hearing110/b_johnson_al.pdf)

Panelist for April 22 Stephanie Bosarge, Secretary of South Bay and Vista Volunteer/sponsored by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives says: “I will ask how can Congress and the Administration ignore the hundreds of families who qualified for rebuilding assistance -- from the Alabama Gulf Coast to historic Africa Town north of Mobile; how can they ignore the Gulf Coast Civic Works Campaign letter signed by 130 groups – from the Baptist Peace Fellowship and Alabama Arise, to the NAACP – asking that \$2.8 billion of unspent & un-earmarked Katrina funds be sent to the people who need it ? And I how can our govt., since Katrina, let the homeowners insurance companies like mine and others go from \$1200 to a predatory \$20 000?”

South Bay is working with the United Nations Human Rights Office, Alabama Arise, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Greater Birmingham Ministries, Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama, ACLU of Alabama. (See attached flyer) Some of the other panel speakers include:

*** Rose “Faya Ora Toure” Sanders of Selma - lawyer; civil rights activist; educator; songwriter; playwright. At the recent commemorative Bloody Sunday crossing in Selma she publicly asked the US Secretary of Education to recognize “Education as a Civil Right”.**

*** Sarah Harris of Daphne - Organizer Hurricane Homeowners Insurance Initiative of Baldwin and Mobile Counties. Ms. Harris, like many since Katrina is facing a predatory homeowners’ deductible of \$10,000.**

***John Zippert - Program Director Fed. of Southern Cooperatives, Epes, AL, will speak on Black Farmers’ Land Loss**

In Memoriam to Alabama's Katrina "Policy" Victims

“In the small Alabama coastal community of Coden, the South Bay Communities Alliance, a non-governmental organization, conducted a survey of residents that revealed 150 Coden families reported significance unmet needs; and 70 Coden families responded that their homes had major damage, but they received little assistance or no assistance from the government. A member of South Bay Communities Alliance documented the deaths of residents whose homes were destroyed by hurricanes:

Coden has never seen so many people pass away in such a short time. My neighbor Delaphine Barber, age 75 lost her home and died from a heart attack about a year after Katrina. Other neighbors who died, trying to survive in the [formaldehyde emitting] FEMA campers, and hoping to see their homes rebuilt were: Sally Dismukes, age 72, died of a heart attack; Tommy Barbour age 56, died of lung cancer; Michael Goleman, age 36 father of two teenage daughters, suicide; Shirley Clark, age 65, complications from a staph infection; Randy Hall, age 45, lung cancer; Nancy Maples, age 57. Most have spouses or children who are still hoping to see their family homes rebuilt. My mother Hilda Nelson died after living in a FEMA camper over a year and hoping for assistance to rebuild the family that never came” — Paul Nelson (April 16, 2010 report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council by Advocates for Environmental Human Rights and The Gulf States Human Rights Working Group -Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana).

Six months after Paul Nelson wrote the above passage (Jan. 2009), he documented that the number of Coden and Bayou La Batre Victims had almost doubled. Recently we learned from Rosie Robbins that her Aunt, Louise Banks of Bayou La Batre, who was healthy when she first moved into a FEMA camper, developed respiratory problems and died less than a month after moving into her rebuilt home.

South Bay will continue to speak out about these tragedies in the hope of finally bringing justice to the Gulf Coast.

Excerpts from “Brochure for Displaced, Neglected Alabama Katrina Victims” Jan. 2009:

“As our maritime ancestors have done for over 300 years, I began to rebuild our family home after Katrina hit. But like others, I was told to tear down what I built because it would not meet the new elevation code. **These codes, which alone cost over \$20,000, have forced working and middle class people in rural coastal Alabama to depend on federal assistance to rebuild -- which for most of us, has not come...**”

“Sadly, however, as we continue our struggle to rebuild, I feel I must testify that it has truly become one of life and death. Mrs. Nghieu Nguyen and her daughter are among many who currently represent this growing tragedy.”



Nov. 4, 2008 by Kieu Lien Atwell case-worker for Boat People SOS Bayou La Batre, and Zack Carter, Organizer AL Arise

“My name is Nghieu Nguyen. I lived with my daughter at 8875 Lindberg Street [Bayou La Batre, AL] for 5 years before Hurricane Katrina. When Katrina came my house was flooded....Everything in our house was destroyed....because I don't speak English I was not able to get enough help...my house has mold...I have lung cancer...water leaks through my roof and my front door is falling apart. I beg for any organization to please help this mother and daughter.” (Mrs. Nguyen's original Vietnamese and translated statement, and her case -worker's statements are attached)

“Brochure for Displaced, Neglected Alabama Katrina Victims” Paul Nelson, Jan. 2009 (cont.)

“Recently [February 2009], several of us tried to visit again with Mrs. Ngieu Nguyen. We learned from a family friend that she is now in the hospital and very ill. Her caseworker says her “dying wish” is for help “... to repair the house for her daughter to live there after she’s is gone because she wants to keep her house and the land together.” [Help never came, Mrs. Ngieuh Nguyen died three months after this photograph was taken.]

“No one actually perished in Alabama during Katrina, *but twelve of my family and neighbors most of whom lived within a half-mile radius of my home*, have died since. I list them below on the “**San Souci, Alabama Katrina Human Casualty Map.**” They all saw their houses either blown away or flooded by Katrina. Each had to go to their graves without hope of having their homes rebuilt, or repaired for their children or spouses. Many of these long-time community members spent a year or more in these formaldehyde contaminated FEMA campers. All of the FEMA campers randomly tested by the Sierra Club in Alabama showed excessive formaldehyde vapors, including the one my mother lived in, Hilda Hebert Nelson.”



“...Three people listed on the edge of the **San Souci, Alabama Human Casualty Map** lived a few miles from my neighborhood. Tommy Barbour lived a couple of miles north in Bayou La Batre. He was a longtime leader of the oystermen’s union, and a long time close friend. I helped Tommy realize his last request -- to have his FEMA camper door widened so that the Providence Hospital bed could fit through the camper door. He wanted to live his last days at “home” with his wife Becky -- who has yet to receive any assistance to rebuild their home of some 20 years. Randy Hall, lived a few miles east of Sans Souci, in Alabama Port, not far from Mobile Bay. He was also a labor leader among our commercial fishermen and a strong voice against coastal pollution.”

“Larry Roberts, was in his late 50’s and lived on rental property in Bayou La Batre. He was a seaman, and cherished life even after his second leg was amputated. He was an outspoken member of the African American community and publicly criticized FEMA on our local CBS TV affiliate for leaving an eviction notice on his FEMA camper while he was in Providence Hospital in Mobile. His last speech was as a patient at Providence in October 2006. He was escorted in his wheel chair to an Alabama Arise meeting in the hospital’s conference room. He addressed the crowd of 40 people with a 15 minute passionate talk about the injustice faced by Katrina survivors from Texas to Alabama.”

“Three more Sans Souci neighbors died during the 2008 holidays, including Jim Fuller, the first President of South Bay Communities Alliance. Margaret Singleton, who has depended on a blue tarp since Katrina, in her often wet and cold trailer, died last month of respiratory failure.”

“Another recent victim, Mary Alice Lee, lived at the corner of Kennedy Road and Railroad Street for decades -- next to the wetland where the City of Bayou La Batre plans to build a condo- friendly waste treatment plant with about 25% of the total of Katrina CDBG Funds received from HUD for our state. **All four homes and the barn on Kennedy Road were blown away by Katrina.**”

“Tommy Lee invited Junior Sprinkle, his childhood buddy, to live on his mother’s property last year, where they built a small shack near the ruins of Mary Alice Lee’s home. Mr. Sprinkle, homeless and ill, had lived with family in Bayou La Batre until the house was demolished. Junior Sprinkle was found dead this past Christmas morning [Christmas 2008].”

[Excerpts from]

Dying For a Home (opinion)

Feb. 15, 2007

Amanda Spake (opinion)

Along the Gulf Coast in the towns and fishing villages from New Orleans to Mobile, survivors of Hurricane Katrina are suffering from a constellation of similar health problems.

They wake up wheezing, coughing, and gasping for breath. Their eyes burn; their heads ache; they feel tired, lethargic. Nosebleeds are common, as are sinus infections and asthma attacks. Children and seniors are most severely afflicted, but no one is immune....

Hilda Nelson, 75, of Coden, Alabama, was not as lucky as the Stewarts. When she moved into a FEMA trailer at the site of her former house, she was in good health, says her son, Paul. Three weeks later, he says, "she was having trouble breathing." Not long after, she was diagnosed with pneumonia, then congestive heart failure, a chronic illness that can cause breathing difficulties.

In June 2006 Paul Nelson ordered a kit to test his mother's trailer for formaldehyde. The results showed the level of the chemical inside her trailer was 50 percent over the EPA's recommended limit.

Scientists familiar with toxics agree that elderly people, like infants, are highly susceptible to the hazards of formaldehyde, particularly if they have underlying illnesses. "We started testing in Alabama," explains Becky Gillette, co-chair of the Mississippi Sierra Club, "because we got reports from social workers there that so many elderly people living in the trailers were being hospitalized for respiratory conditions. And many of them were dying."

In October 2006, at the age of 76, Hilda Nelson died, one year and one month after moving into her FEMA trailer. Doctors "never had an answer" as to why her health deteriorated so quickly, says her son. "But I have my suspicions. I point the finger at the formaldehyde..."



The foundations pictured above were all that was left of the Nelson family home and oyster processing plant after Katrina hit. Hilda Hebert Nelson lived in the formaldehyde fume emitting FEMA camper (pictured in the foreground) for over a year hoping to see their home rebuilt until her death Oct. 4, 2006.

Like hundreds of others, the family homeowners insurance was canceled after Hurricane Ivan the summer before Katrina. Mr. Nelson applied to the Red Cross for his family. After considering the application for almost two years, Red Cross informed Mr. Nelson they had "run out of Katrina funds." Paul and his disabled brother vacated their FEMA camper (rear of photo) under threat of eviction. The family property remains barren.



Hilda Hebert Nelson of Coden, Alabama, pictured (second from right) during her first meeting with Alabama Arise members on Sept. 5, 2006. A few days later she felt strong enough to travel 4 hours to the Arise Annual meeting in Montgomery -- where the members voted to endorse Fair Katrina relief and policy. Hilda Nelson died a few days after the meeting on Oct. 4, 2006.



“...historic African American community of Trinity Gardens in Mobile, where 80 families are in a critical situation facing another wet, cold winter still depending on ragged tarps” Flyer from March 1, 2008 “Tour for Neglected Alabama Katrina Victims.” http://www.nesri.org/media_updates/NeglectedKatrinaVictimsFlyer.pdf

Thanks to committed private fundraising by Bay Area Women Coalition of Mobile, over 200 families received Katrina assistance; yet as of April 2010 some 41 families in Trinity Gardens live in homes seriously damaged by Katrina.

“Brochure for Displaced, Neglected Alabama Katrina Victims” (cont.)

“My home community, Alabama’s southwest Gulf Coast, was hit the hardest by Katrina in our state. But data sent to Alabama Arise from Mobile County’s administrator for the Katrina CDBG Funds show there are Katrina Victims suffering throughout the City and County of Mobile. In the historic Africa American communities, of Prichard, Plateau, and Magazine which encompass old Africa Town (<http://www.arts.state.al.us/actc/articles/africa.htm>), there are 217 families who qualified for one of the Mobile Katrina CDBG grants.”

“There are 177 families that qualified for assistance and who live along Dauphin Island Parkway on the southeastern edge of the city limits of Mobile (36605). For generations this community, known as “D.I.P.” has been a mix of working class and middle class, both black and white.”

“And in **Satchel Paige’s** old Mobile neighborhood of “Down the Bay” there are 59 families who have qualified for these federal rebuilding funds. These Katrina CDBG grants, once they are funded, could put hundreds of people back in their homes, restore historic and culturally significant neighborhoods. And \$110 million of worth of construction [*three bipartisan requests from members of Alabama’s US Congressional delegation and the AL Governor’s representative have made this formerly requested this amount*] by , along with its economic multiplier could put a lot of people to work.”



Jim Fuller (first President of South Bay Communities Alliance) and his wife Judy Buff’s home after Katrina. They lived in a FEMA camper next to these ruins almost two years. Jim died of a massive stroke while working at his desk in November 22, 2008. In the year and a half since his death, Ms. Buff, after fighting serious lung disease, foreclosure and eviction, was recently forced to sell their property.

“On Dec. 1, 2009, The Mobile County Commission gave Judy Buff a, [resolution honoring Jim Fuller’s advocacy](#) to bring fair Katrina assistance to our unincorporated towns. Judy and Jim were married for 29 years. Colonel Roosevelt Lewis, whose family is a pillar of the Coden community and a founder of the Tuskegee Airmen Museum, read the resolution as Jim’s obituary. [The local CBS TV affiliate covered his memorial](#), and the [Mobile Press paid homage](#). I pray that his advocacy has not been in vain.”