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**ETHICS NEWS & VIEWS**  
*Fall 2005 • Vol. 14 • No. 1*

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*Ethics News & Views* is published quarterly by the Center for Ethics, Emory University, a nonprofit organization dedicated to igniting moral imagination, deepening knowledge of ethics, and encouraging lives of moral meaning and ethical practice.

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For more information, including updates on programs and events, visit our website at http://ethics.emory.edu.

The Center for Ethics is committed to being a national leader, recognized for excellence in ethical research, education and outreach by:

- Strengthening ethical knowledge and stimulating moral imaginations
- Translating ethical thought into practice
- Generating and promoting primary scholarship in ethics
- Fostering lives of moral meaning and ethical engagement

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As we all watched the enormity of the disaster along the Gulf Coast unfold early in September, many felt a mixture of being overwhelmed by the scope of suffering along with an intense desire to act, to do something that might help those in need. Emory as a community joined many other communities in reaching out to provide food, supplies, clothing, and money, and hands-on help as well. Physicians and nurses cared for – and continue to care for - evacuees transported to the Atlanta area; public health and environmental science experts offered assistance. And the University and the Center for Ethics began to reflect and frame what we were experiencing.

In the midst of the uncertainty Center faculty and staff worked to create a space where the community within and beyond Emory could begin to process what was happening in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Two afternoons of discussion and presentation provided an opportunity for interaction between faculty, staff, students and community members on September 13 and 15, under the title Falling Apart and Coming Together: Ethical Responses to Hurricane Katrina. On the first afternoon we were joined by wonderfully reflective experts who provided ethical perspectives from/on public health, environmental impact, leadership and competency issues, race and class concerns, and the nature of ethical response for the “long haul.” These were powerful reflections and we are so grateful that these speakers have provided their comments for publication in this newsletter issue. (see pages 4-5, 9-14) The responses and dialogue sparked among those in attendance was also powerful, including those from several evacuees who shared their compelling stories. Many participants began to recognize that the depth and intensity of many of the questions raised reflected much deeper concerns about individual identity and the nature of our common commitments.

We as a Center recognized the risk of reflecting and beginning to analyze our ethical responses too early. We acknowledged the risk of - and desire to avoid - misnaming the complexity, fingerpointing or perhaps, missing the point. And yet we determined that there was for many a need to process, that there was merit in the freshness of reflecting in the moment and the ability to recall details, and that beginning to name the messiness had value.

In addition to ethical analysis through reasoning and justification, I believe that there is a place for hearing our emotions, our stories, and beginning to appreciate the complexity that weaves ethical analysis, including the reality of preparedness and responsiveness to disaster. Timely and creative response to contemporary issues is consonant with the vision of the Center for Ethics: igniting the moral imagination of 21st century leaders.

As I looked at the water of the Gulf and listened to the words of our September 13 panelists, an image emerged. Dr. Tracy Yandle from Environmental Sciences spoke about the Mississippi River “wanting to move” against our human efforts to channel and control it. Reverend Susan Henry Crowe, University Chaplain, named our “urge to return to normal,” to therapeutically “forget,” – an urge which we see just a few weeks later despite the “reminder” of Hurricane Rita. Dr. Alton Pollard from Theology warned against an “illusory domestic tranquility”conditioned by nonconcern about issues of power and hierarchy. How do we resist the urge to return to a “normalcy” that neither “sees” nor leads to action? The Center for Ethics invites others at Emory and in the community to join us as a leader and partner in remembering, imagining, and helping to transform through thought and action. We hope you will be a part of this commitment in future events, courses, research and outreach with the Center for Ethics.

Kathy Kinlaw
Ethical Responses to Hurricane Katrina

On Tuesday, September 13 and Thursday, September 15, the Center sponsored a two-part conversation entitled, “Falling Apart & Coming Together: Ethical Responses to Hurricane Katrina.”

During Tuesday’s panel discussion, five preeminent voices at Emory spoke words of great insight to the eighty attendees. They have graciously agreed to share their remarks in this newsletter.

Thursday brought a group of twenty-five staff, faculty, students, and community members together to discuss follow-up questions to those raised on Tuesday and to think about further steps that the group itself could take.

Here are Tuesday’s remarks:

Public Health Ethics

Dr. Jim Buehler

I wish to acknowledge my wife, Lydia Ogden, MPP, for her thoughtful suggestions regarding this presentation, especially her recommendation to cite the preamble to our Constitution.

In this presentation I will offer preliminary observations about public health ethics and Hurricane Katrina. To begin, I will consider the context of public health practice that shapes these questions, including questions that are already apparent and others that have yet to come into focus.

I am not an ethicist; I am a public health physician. Before joining the Emory faculty in 2002, I worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most recently in the area of HIV, sexually transmitted disease, and tuberculosis, where I confronted ethics questions about public health practice and research. In addition, since 2002, I have worked as a consultant to the Division of Public Health of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, where I have been involved in supporting efforts to improve preparedness for public health emergencies. I have also been involved in Emory’s response to Katrina, mainly through efforts to link public health students to public health response activities in Georgia.

In thinking about the role of public health in the United States, it is useful to look at the preamble to our Constitution, which begins with the words: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare…”

Clearly, protecting public health is part of promoting “general Welfare.” The role of government in protecting public health goes far beyond what agencies called “public health departments” do. Healthcare, police and fire departments, ambulance services, environmental protection—air and water quality, food safety, housing, and building and maintaining levees are all part of our government’s role in protecting our health and safety. One could easily argue that the things governments do outside health departments have a far greater impact on health than health departments. This is often dramatically apparent in disasters and is clearly evident with Hurricane Katrina.

For our government, the large ethical questions raised by the hurricane center on questions about justice—the equitable distribution of the benefits and risks of what governments do on our behalf. The concept of fairness also comes to the fore. In public health, questions about ethics often manifest as debates about how resources are used.

In thinking about the tools of public health practice, ethics questions often center on the balance between individual autonomy and community benefit. Public health departments may intrude on our privacy to collect information that is used to monitor health trends or investigate health threats. Rarely, public health agencies invoke their “police powers,” usually as a last resort when less coercive measures have been, or are likely to be, unsuccessful. Examples include confinement of people with contagious tuberculosis who refuse to adhere to prescribed treatments, the imposition of quarantine or isolation during epidemics of infectious diseases such as SARS, or the mandatory evacuation of people from unsafe environments after a disaster.

In response to Hurricane Katrina, public health agencies like the federal CDC and state health departments are filling familiar roles: identifying threats to health, monitoring health trends, investigating suspect clusters of disease or outbreaks, issuing disease prevention recommendations and healthcare guidelines based on prior experience and ongoing investigations, and facilitating access to healthcare. In Georgia, public health activities in response to Katrina are managed under a state-level Emergency Operations Center, or EOC, that functions under the authority of the Governor, and that communicates with the Department of Human Resources’ EOC, which includes representation from Division of Public Health.

Together, these “command and control” systems serve to coordinate interactions between the Division of Public Health and constituents throughout the state, including other state agencies, local public health districts, healthcare providers, and voluntary organizations. Public health departments have been working with healthcare providers, including Emory Healthcare, and voluntary organizations, such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, to assess and monitor the health of evacuees from the Gulf Coast and to facilitate access to healthcare services. The capacity of public health in Georgia to manage this response builds on prior experience in preparing for events such as the 1996 Olympics and the 2004 G8 Summit and experience in accommodating evacuees from Florida during prior hurricanes, in responding to major floods in south Georgia in the past decade, and, since 2001, in bolstering preparedness for bio- and other forms of terrorism.

A dilemma for public health agencies
is that public health and healthcare services are often framed conceptually as a dichotomy, rather than points along a continuum. As a result, public health is too often perceived as something distinct from healthcare. In part, this stems from public health in this country being almost exclusively a government function, while healthcare is a mixed private and government activity. Public health emergencies, including events such as the anthrax attacks in 2001, where there was a need to provide prophylactic medications to hundreds of postal workers, and Hurricane Katrina, serve as vivid reminders of the interdependence of public health and healthcare. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, access to healthcare has been a primary, if not the primary, public health concern. Hurricane Katrina has unmasked disparities in access to health care and the vulnerabilities of the disadvantaged. When the death counts are complete and death rates are calculated, it is not difficult to predict that all-too-familiar disparities by race or economic status will be sadly clear. Katrina has exposed and forces us to confront justice as an ethical concern.

Other ethics questions raised by Katrina concern how we set priorities in public health. We have already heard criticisms that preparations for terrorism have been misplaced and that public health resources dedicated to terrorism would have been better spent preparing for natural disasters. How we use our resources for emergency preparedness has also been framed as a dichotomy:

- Should we prepare for terrorism, or should we prepare for natural or unintended people-made disasters or epidemics?
- Should we prepare for extraordinarily rare but potentially overwhelming events, or should we prepare for more ordinary but less catastrophic public health emergencies?

Again, this should be considered a continuum rather than a dichotomy. In many respects, the roles and activities of public health and other agencies are the same regardless of the type of disaster, giving rise to the concept of “all hazards” planning. Clearly, different types of disasters pose unique challenges that require anticipation, but it will be essential to prepare for emergencies in ways that maximize utility across the broadest possible spectrum of threats, emphasizing the common elements of emergency response.

For example, I have been part of a series of “tabletop” exercises conducted in a number of districts throughout the state over the past year. These exercises were developed to test local public health capacity to recognize and mount an initial response to several bioterrorism scenarios, requiring collaboration with other agencies, multiple levels of government, and a variety of community partners. In those parts of the state that have had to respond to hurricane threats and floods, it was clear that essential working relationships were better developed, enhancing emergency preparedness for bioterrorism.

The lesson from this experience is that we need to seek ways for the direction of benefits of preparedness to point in both directions when thinking about terrorism and natural or unintended disasters. We need to think about how we can do a better job of learning from our everyday experience as an indicator of our emergency preparedness. In exercises and in the reality of Katrina, it is also clear that we also need to be better prepared to provide for the most vulnerable among us.

The transition from the emergency to subsequent response phases will raise further ethical questions for public health, especially as we seek to document and evaluate our performance, summarize lessons learned, and develop recommendations for the future. In the crisis of an emergency, we may give less attention to informed consent or protecting privacy and...
This summer, EASL (Ethics and Servant Leadership) program alum Leila Barker, a senior with a double major in Biology and Music, made a ten-week bike trip from Oregon to Georgia seeking answers. Concerned about the environment and its future, she set out on her bike, asking, "What does water sound like in nature: when it is it contact with human forces, and when it is unbridled and free? Are we living in harmony with the earth or hurting it?" She will write her findings, in music.

Leila is presenting sound clips from her trip at the SIRE symposium October 21. The final piece will be performed in a recital in Spring 2006. Her tools for this 3,000 mile trip were a sound recorder, determination, a bicycle and moral imagination.

K: Your trip across the country to explore questions about the environment, water and nature-human harmony was a huge undertaking. Why did you decide seek answers this way?

L: I have dreamt of riding across the country on my bike for a long time and have been interested in environmental issues for many years. Originally, I thought it would be great to find a way to travel along rivers across the country and just listen. Music, water and cycling – the trip allowed a fortuitous coalescence of three loves.

Initially, I was interesting in writing on the environment and water. But then I went and talked to a few folks in the music department with some very nebulous ideas concerning water. During this time, I played a lot of Mendelssohn pieces on the piano – and many pieces were inspired by water. That got me thinking.

I came to realize that many musical pieces had really idealistic views of nature. The way water was portrayed in these pieces sounds nothing like water as we hear it. I thought it would be a really interesting exercise to try and create a composition that speaks to the state of water in the environment, as it exists today. I wanted to try and write something that would reflect the realities of industrialization, human impact and some of the views of water that are "less romantic.”

I like the idea of impressionism, instead of realism, because it doesn’t necessarily have to be a strict reflection of what’s there. Rather, it can take your own biases and either reinforce them or question them.

K: When you started, what were some of your ideas about water and the environment? Did your trip reinforce or question those ideas?

L: Going in, I was very conscious about what I’d read about the state of small streams: I had lots of concerns about chemicals and agricultural products and how those products were affecting ecosystems in streams. As the trip progressed, I became more interested in the larger rivers – for the same reasons – but I also became interested in what large rivers represent to the American psyche. I became really interested in the fact that rivers today are nothing like they were two hundred years ago. Many of the major rivers – like the Mississippi and the Columbia – are, in essence, now a large series of reservoirs: one after the other. There is practically no natural flow. The natural flow has been changed to accommodate trade routes and to create hydroelectric power. There was a huge realization that the water has been polluted by the things we couldn’t see, but also by the ways that human interaction changed so much of the aquatic environment.

K: What do you mean when you say the ‘aquatic environment’?

L: Specifically, I mean the internal eco-system and the physical movement of the river.

I think a lot of people still have these misconceptions of rivers as being these huge unbridled forces of nature that we idealize and write poems about. In reality, they have been twisted and altered by humans so much that it made me question to what degree they are natural forces anymore.

K: Could you hear the industrialization in your water sound samples?

L: One of the most telling examples would be when I was in Portland, Oregon at the Columbia River. I decided to take a recording. Until I actually played the recording back I hadn’t been aware of the power of the outside environment. The only thing I ended up hearing in that recording were the cars on the freeway overhead on the bridge. There was no sound of water or even of the people walking on the path behind me. I was five feet from the riverside.

Another thing that surprised me was the sound of babbling brooks. I was never able to find an undisturbed body of water that matched my preconceived notion of what a stream or creek would sound like. Ironically, the most “natural,” gurgly, bubbly sounds tended to arise out of culverts, where humans had diverted the water to run beneath roads. Somehow the concrete and metal pipes tended to produce echoes and resonances that resulted in a deceptively authentic-sounding “wild” stream sound.

K: Was there a water source you found that was pristine and untouched?

L: The Lochsa River in Idaho was the best example of a large scale river. It ran and ran for miles without being disturbed at all.

K: Your next step is to create a piece of music that translates sounds of nature into sonic parts. What are the themes and findings you want to convey and try to translate into music?

L: There are a number of them. There is a certain sense of a lost past, in relationship to water, which we don’t fully realize. The mystery of the natural sound, in many ways, has disappeared. On my trip, I saw some examples of small farms that were careful to respect the flow of rivers and to deal with them in a manner that wasn’t environmentally destructive. That was reflected in the water power mills I recorded in the west: Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska. In those instances, hu-
I was intrigued, too, by the sound of agricultural sprinklers. I questioned what they represented as a symbol of our own decisions to control the flows of rivers and to control weather by creating rain. I came to realize that those were the most prevalent water sounds I heard on my trip. What does that mean?

Finally, I hope to include a sound of nature that wasn’t specifically water related but was unavoidable: insect sounds. I noticed how insect sounds in the natural world mimicked some of my other recordings. Cicadas sounded like the agricultural sprinklers. A fly getting close to my microphone sounded like a passing truck. I think there are some interesting ways to draw comparisons between the two.

K: I am struck by these comparisons. I am also struck by “water power mills” that you passed in the west. I’ve seen those, too; they also have a sound. Do you think that they are the sound of harmony between humans and nature? Did you hear hopeful sounds on your trip?

L: I’m really concerned that I not write a piece of music only focused on a sense of loss; I want to work on something that awakens people to the current reality of water. My main concern with saying that there is a harmony between water and humans is that, on this trip, I rarely saw people interacting with any water machinery or water at all. I never saw a person standing by a windmill, controlling a sprinkler, or walking around with the cows that I recorded splashing around a pond. I think there is a definite sterility to the current sound of nature and humanity.

K: Do you think that sterile sound says anything about how humanity relates to nature currently?

L: Yes and no. What I would have liked to do was to go to a community that runs in tune with nature and listen to those sounds. I didn’t find that. There must be a happy medium between the convenience of modern machinery and a sense of responsibility for the power of nature.

K: Translating your sound recordings into a piece of music is not an easy task. There is a fine balance, that you, as the composer, must strike between manipulating the sounds, letting them stand on their own, and framing them in a larger piece of music. How do you want the piece to function for its listeners?

L: I don’t want the final piece to be instructional, because there are many ways that people can get the ravensness of something. I think I am more interested in leaving them with a mental juxtaposition of sounds. I want people to hear what is, what may be, and all the grey areas around how humans intersect with nature. I want to leave it open for questioning. I would really love for people to come away from this piece wondering if what they heard was beautiful or it was something to be concerned about. I think there is a lot to be said for ambiguity.

K: So – you want the piece to be proactive, but you do not want it to tell the listeners what to think?

L: I think I would be unable to write a piece without some sort of conclusion that I would understand. But, the only shared sense I want is it to make people ask questions.

K: This idea and this piece of music give people an opportunity to ask these questions and explore answers by using senses that we often don’t privilege in the academy. Your project is not a lecture, an article or a book. Why did you explore these questions this way, and why did you choose music as the translator?

L: I heard a really wonderful radio program at one point where a person was asked to choose between truth and beauty. He chose beauty because, as he put it, beauty is more inspiring than truth. I think we are faced with truths whether they are beautiful, or hard, or ugly, every day. Often the stark reality of hearing or reading what can be very “stale” words can desensitize us. As a musician, I pay attention to the effects of sound, and I think a lot about whether we respect and rely on our sense of hearing. With the advent of television and the decline of the radio, I wonder whether people really respond to what we hear, or whether we know how to listen. Recently, it has become common for people to carry iPods, creating soundtracks of our own making in our heads. Are we becoming insensitive to the sounds of the natural world?

I feel passionately about creating something in the sonic format. I wanted people to get information about environmental issues, to pay attention, in an entirely different way than they are used to.

K: Do you think we need different ways of learning and knowing around environmental issues?

L: I think there is disconnect between hearing or seeing and then having the knowledge sink in. I think important issues need to be addressed through different languages. I think the work of writing articles is incredibly important, but I wanted to experiment. I wanted to see if there was a way to complement the standard ways of presentations, another basic human way to communicate.

K: What else do you want us to know about this project?

L: I think a lot of what humans have done to nature can be undone, but only if we start to really change our ways.

Nature is incredibly powerful. We have to remember that there was equilibrium before humans started to mess it up. If we want to have a place here, we need to be conscious that it is morally wrong to aspire to a world where nature and everything else is controlled by our whims.
EASL Summer Interns: Beyond Expectations

The 2005 Servant Leadership Summer Internship Program saw the largest group and the widest variety ever in the program’s history. Twelve interns worked in eleven different Atlanta area organizations, undertaking tasks as varied as: counseling summer camp, creating holocaust education curriculum, teaching computer programming to children, and providing indigents with health care and legal services. The students worked thirty hours weekly at their placement sites and, on Fridays, had four hours of classroom work. Classroom time was spent developing ethical leadership, management skills, and working through issues and questions that emerged during their work experiences.

For many of the students, the biggest challenge was developing the courage and willingness to accept the high-level of responsibility many of their placement sites offered to them. Since most non-profits operate on too tight margins and with too little staff, highly qualified and motivated individuals within those organizations often can find themselves with responsibilities they had not imagined being given. This year’s class readily stepped up and met the challenges presented to them, including one intern who completed what was scheduled to be an eight week project in two weeks.

All of the students provided wonderful services to their organizations, a fact reflected in the comments from their evaluations. The most common criticism from the placement sites was that they hated for the intern to leave. As one supervisor wrote, “I wish she could have stayed with us. [The intern] went way above and beyond any expectations we could ever have created. No regrets, no weaknesses, not one.”

Written by Edward Queen

List of Interns & their Placement Sites

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confidentiality when lives are in danger or other needs are so clearly overwhelming. But these concerns, as well as related questions about the boundary between public health practice and research and about adherence to procedures for assuring ethical conduct, such as Institutional Review Board oversight for research, will return to our attention. In this transition, it will be important to avoid overstepping the boundary of the emergency phase.

In closing, the ethical questions raised by Hurricane Katrina will be a moving target in the months to come. As another speaker this afternoon observed, it is both timely and too early to consider these questions.

**The Long-Term Moral Obligation**

*Rev. Susan Henry Crowe*

It’s been a long time since I talked about disaster relief. I worked with the United Methodist Committee on Relief during Hurricane Hugo in 1989, but I’ve been in this position at Emory since then.

In any disaster, the desire on the part of the human community to help is strong. Depending on the disaster, the early hours of the emergency usually require immediate assistance in supplying water, power, food, toiletries, triage and other crisis care.

Shortly after the immediate needs of communities are identified and addressed the moral obligation for long term recovery is necessary. Often unaffected communities are willing to respond to short term needs but often forget the need for long term and ongoing care.

Disaster Response is a three phase process defined by the Red Cross, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and other church and social service agencies. The emergency stage is the first stage during which time rescue efforts and infrastructure repair are carried out by official agencies. Katrina was so massive and cut so deeply into the infrastructure that the Emergency Stage will last longer than is normally expected. For every day of emergency response, you can roughly figure that there will be 1 month of relief work (If the Emergency Response is 12 days then we are looking at 12 months of

Relief work in which time damaged is assessed, emotional and spiritual care is needed and the long road to recovery begins.)

In the second phase, the relief phase, assistance is provided to home owners who need to “muck out,” assess damage, receive emotional and spiritual care, and begin their long road to recovery. During this time local churches, service agencies, and clean up crews are very active, acting as shelters and support areas for the community.

The third phase, long-term recovery, involves a holistic approach to people who have suffered losses. It covers everything from seeking them out in their neighborhood to providing information and advocacy about their federal and state assistance rights. In coordination with other religious bodies and community service agencies, agencies participate in repairing and rebuilding of homes and in assisting with living expenses.

Hurricanes Hugo (1989) and Andrew (1991) caused FEMA to change its approach. Camille and other hurricanes had done massive damage, but the Federal infrastructure had been more limited in its approach. Hugo and Andrew made it clear that governmental and church agencies needed more sophisticated structures to address massive disasters. FEMA was restructured in new ways.

Growing technology and sophisticated communication systems both helped and created additional anxiety and fear. When they works, it’s great; when they don’t, stress is heightened. In my own judgment, that was one of the first things that happened in Katrina: the communication systems fell apart. And that is one of the things that make me a little bit more sympathetic to all that’s happened in the news. It is very hard to organize anything when you have no communications system.

In addition to that, once the communications system failed there was heightened anxiety and fear. In Hurricane Hugo, you didn’t have cell phones, and so there wasn’t a fear of the failure of the communications system. Anxiety was heightened because of the loss of technology.

All disasters are different and Katrina is no exception. Issues related to weather, flooding, the breaching of levees, a massive storm hitting a coastal region compromising populations which are already vulnerable all contributed. The political and social justice issues related to these factors made this disaster even more complex.

Burnout in the recovery efforts in the aftermath of Katrina will be enormous. Already police, firefighters, civic leaders and others are suffering deeply from Post Traumatic Stress. The devastation is so deep that those who invested so much in the earliest hours and days will be very reluctant to leave the situation: the Governor, the Mayor, civil servants, ministers, FEMA and Red Cross workers, etc. Even now, we are moving into the days when everyone who has worked since the beginning should be out of the situation in order to sleep, rest, eat, talk, and try to think about reordering their own lives. Having trusted and rested relief is critical.

Sustaining people for the long haul is imperative. Listening to everyone’s stories is important. Journalist, leaders, and people on the ground need somebody who can hear the anxiety and the anger and the fear and the grief.

I was with a young woman the other day, whose family was New Orleans, and she was talking, talking, talking and she said: “We haven’t found my brother yet, but I’m sure he’s okay. But everything…” and she just kept talking. I said: “There’s so much grief, isn’t there?” and she just burst into tears. There is no way to articulate the depth of a loss.

Being discrete and thoughtful about what is “help” is important. Going into the area and having to depend on the survivors to help house, feed, provide electricity, find a place to put clothes and others outpourings of help is a second disaster on the ground. The last thing that people on the ground need is one more thing to organize. The people, even with limited damage to their lives are traumatized and still in shock. In most cases, money is the most helpful. In a few weeks or months, organized assessment and providing short term housing for the winter will be important.

How can a community like Emory be...
helpful?
Ponder, critique, and help think about the larger intellectual issues: environment, roots causes of poverty, race and class and access to services, the issues of suffering, the root causes of economic disparity and the impact on communities when there is a disaster. That is what a university does and that’s one of the things that I think that we are called to do.

Find ways to help people return to normal, although they never entirely will. Money helps. Prayers and good wishes help. Listen, write letters, listen. Help survivors to write, draw pictures, play music, sing songs—begin to have anything that facilitates their putting their lives back together.

Work in the region when systems are in place remembering how great the need for normalcy is especially in the face of disaster and grief. Having a lot of people, no matter how well-intentioned, is not a help. Remember what it is like of the 4th day of Thanksgiving, when all of your extended family is around. It is often too much.

In a few weeks, work teams will be needed. Mucking out. Shovels and hammers and getting all that mud, filth out of the homes that will not be leveled. But be sure that you are totally self-sufficient. You do not want to have to ask the community for ANYTHING: where to stay, what to eat, even much organization (i.e. what do you need for me to do?). Connect with a group in a region where you are invited by organizations that have an infrastructure in place to accommodate workers.

There’s one exception to what I’ve said about staying out during the emergency phase. In the beginning phase of disaster, the survival needs are very important. So, the medical community and the communication systems need to be in because you need medical care, water, and care givers who can provide medical assistance. Emory has done a really wonderful job, as far as I can tell, at beginning to be in the situation in the beginning days. And that’s very, very important. The clean-up effort can’t start until the infrastructure is somehow put back together so that it can work.

So, medical, military, communication, and transportation services are very critical early on. Churches are good and different denominations do different things well. The Salvation Army has done a very good job in these early days of getting food and water into the community. Denominational groups like Catholic Services and the Jewish Federation and the United Methodist Committee on Relief will do a good job in the long haul. The recovery phase will last, as I’ve indicated, a long time and there is plenty of work for all of us do. I hope that we will do it well.

**Wade in the Water: Race & Class**
*Dr. Alton Pollard*

More than forty years have passed since James Baldwin first tried to reason with white people in the land of his birth to learn to “put yourself in the skin of a black person” (no less a poor person, gay person or any one of the multitudes of the nation’s disinherited). The words are taken from his famous text “The Fire Next Time,” the title of which is in turn drawn from a prophecy recreated from the Bible among the community of Africa’s enslaved children in North America:

“God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!”

The meaning of this ancestral message from antebellum era America and segregated America in sad respects remains the same in September 2005. So much has changed; so little has changed. We have gone forward; we have stepped backward. We are in motion; and yet we are very much standing still. In between these several poetic assertions lies the complex and shaded truths about the state of race, ethnicity and social class in our country.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is a propitious time for us to take stock of where we are as a nation, region, city, school, citizens, to do some civic inventory and assess our public policies and priorities. The passing of Katrina has become a natural documentary of the fortunes of black, brown and white, rich, middle class and poor, the margins and the center, the children, the aged, and infirm, the haves, the have-nots and the never-are-supposed-to-haves in this land. When the fierce winds of nature’s fury joined with the gigantic tides of the Gulf to bring further erosion to the wetlands, and when the creaking walls of antiquated levees finally gave way in the city unable to hold the flood waters back any more, those who managed to survive in convoys, terminals, hospitals, dorm rooms or wherever and without benefit of outside aid for a time, gathered in places near and far with family and friends and strangers to celebrate the miracle that they are yet alive. The silver lining in the cloud is this: the all too tenuous lease on life had by so many – in America the land of plenty – has found a temporary haven in the nation’s psyche, philanthropy and nonpartisan goodwill.

In truth, the race and class-based abandonment of untold thousands to disparity, disease, despair and death began long ago in pre-hurricane New Orleans. Number one among the five cities with the highest concentration of urban poor in the United States (and lest we congratulate ourselves too fast, Atlanta is also high on the list), the Crescent City is no different than any other American urban enclave, when it comes to a nation unwilling to live out its creed.

New Orleans is two-thirds black, with 50% of that 67% living below the poverty line. In this tourist destination city, living wages are hard to come by for workers held captive to the substandard pay of service driven industries. Environmental hazards prevail in the city’s submerged and 98% black Ninth Ward, which has long been ground zero for toxic exposure of people to the Mississippi River chemical corridor. While more than $400 billion has been spent on an unjust war in Iraq (more than $5 billion a week and counting), our government has scarcely approved than $5 billion a week and counting), our government has scarcely approved one-eighth this amount for the entire Gulf Coast catastrophe to date. Our national predilection for disparity, our festering inequalities and destructive priorities, have affected and infected St. Bernards and Jefferson Parish, Biloxi, Moss Point, Pascagoula, Mobile and thousands of communities from coast to coast.

It has been said by many that better planning and response by local, state and federal authorities could have less-
ened the severity of the hurricane’s impact. Perhaps. But the just and moral exercise of power before the winds and waters came would have done far more to stem the disproportionate suffering. Greater redress and resistance against the terrors of tyranny on the part of blacks and browns, the poor and the working poor, and progressive-minded women and men is now called for. In seasons of relative economic prosperity and peace, the persistence of racism can lie so subliminal and fallow, as to escape clear and obvious detection by those who desperately want to believe the social fabric is not already rent. A former professor of mine was fond of saying that life has always been cheap in America, and black life is the cheapest of all, for what we value most about persons in this land is never their humanity, but their utility. We have artfully developed techniques in race and class relations management, relegating “unacceptable” women, men and children to back alleys, underpasses, projects, ghettos, shelters, jails, prisons and other carefully controlled and shadowed spaces.

In a complex society like ours, it is well understood that no individual has power except to the extent she discovers a body of sentiment for her own ideals and values for which she can marshal further support. The Adolf Hitlers, Osama ben Ladens, Edgar Ray Killens, David Dukes, Eric Rudolphs, and Saddam Husseins are not solitary or exceptional examples of bigotry, tyranny or racism in our world. New Orleans is our Afghanistan. The Gulf Coast is our Iraq. Crime and violence were there before and during Hurricane Katrina because the violation of people has long been endemic in our land. Racism is second nature to us. It is the American way of life. The tragedy of our time is that whether one is personally a racist or not is increasingly inconsequential, because it is our “silent consensus,” “neutral nonconcern,” and “outward conformity” on matters of race, class, gender, sexuality and more which institutionalizes hierarchy, division and disdain and is now the given that entraps us all. Justice and righteousness will have their day and at the expense of an illusory domestic tranquility.

As the floodwaters recede, let us raise our voices. Let us dare to hope. No, let us do more. Let us dedicate our very lives to the remaking of America. In my mind’s eye, I catch a glimpse of the possible in one of my favorite Spirituals:

“Wade in the water.
Wade in the water, children.
Wade in the water.
God’s gonna trouble the waters.”

Ethics & Incompetence
Dr. Edward Queen

There is a scene in George Bernard Shaw’s Major Barbara when Lady Britomore has become so disgusted with everyone around her – her estranged husband, her son, her daughters and their suitors – that she blurts out:

“Lomax, you are a fool. Adolphus Cusins, you are a Jesuit. Stephen, you are a prig. Barbara, you are a lunatic. Andrew, you are a vulgar tradesman. Now you all know my opinion and my conscience is clear, at all events.”

In response, her estranged husband, Andrew Undershaft, responds, “My dear, you are the very incarnation of morality. Your conscience is clear and your duty done when you have called everybody names” and, by implication, have assigned blame.

There is an apt level of caution in this vignette. The ability to call everyone the appropriate name, assign the requisite level of blame, and then feel that one has done her or his moral duty is not what is called for in a situation like this. The goal of clearing one’s conscience, in the words of Lady Britomart – of absolving oneself of responsibility in order to make political points – is misplaced here.

It is especially inappropriate given the magnitude of the disaster and thefailings, which were markedly well-distributed, from the lowest to the highest levels—from those who could (and should have left) and did not (and the sheer number of private cars inundated by the flooding well demonstrates that many could have fled who did not), to the looters who preyed on innocents (and here I am not speaking of those who sought the necessities of life), to New Orleans’ local government that failed miserably in the implementation of its existing plan, to the highest levels of the federal government. I could go on, and will in a moment, but want to stop here to identify what is my true goal this afternoon—to speak to the issue of competence as an ethical reality: what ought we, reasonably, to expect from individuals?

Incompetence is immorality. This statement has several dimensions. First, to continue in a position that one lacks the competence to fulfill is immoral. For that reason Michael Browne, the discredited director of FEMA should have resigned (as he did last night and, fortunately, I caught the news and so I could rewrite this part of my talk), but he should have done the honorable thing and fallen on his sword, at least metaphorically, much earlier. Not because he is bad, but because he is a man who, through no fault of his own, had been elevated above his competence. Now, both he and the world know it. He continued in the position of director, knowing that he was unable to meet his obligations; and that was wrong. Please note that I am not referring to mere mistakes, I am talking about the ability to fulfill the overall duties of an office. I am speaking about competence, not perfection.

Second, it is the obligation of systems, their duty, to accomplish the purposes for which they exist and for those supervising them to ensure that the mechanisms and personnel are there to accomplish those purposes. That is what moral leadership is about: the ability to deliver the goods, as well as the Good. Nothing can be good that does not work; mere good intentions, as the saying has informed us all, pave the road to hell.

The importance of competence in public leadership has been recognized by individuals as diverse as Martin Luther and Hunter S. Thompson of blessed memory. Luther is purported to have claimed, “Better to be ruled by a wise Turk than a stupid Christian.” While Thompson, in one of his columns written during the 1976 primary campaigns when discussing the democratic hopefuls noted that his wife “liked Mo Udall. I like Mo Udall too (he quipped). I also like Jerry Jeff Walker, the notorious New Orleans
...Katrina reflections (continued)

scofflaw and musician and a helluva lot of other people I would not want to be president of the United States.” Unfortunately, there has been an increasing failure to recognize that neither the likeability of people and policies nor the ideologization of politics ought to be the touchstone of choice for public leadership. The moral question is: can the individual do the job?

But before we turn to a deeper discussion of this matter, I want to spend a few moments talking about what did work. It is so easy to focus on the failures (and they are innumerable), that one can readily miss how much bad stuff did not happen, was prevented, or was minimized. Among those successes, and I make the contrarian point, was social order. Certainly for three days last week we saw a near-complete breakdown of social order in parts of New Orleans, but what about the rest of the region that was equally (if not more) hard hit? And, with the arrival of the representatives of law and order, the chaos melted away. You did not see the emergence of long-term warlordism that marks many places where natural and man-made disasters have led to the breakdown of social order.

The second is the clear fact that the needs of the evacuees, though certainly too slowly and perhaps inadequately, are being addressed. Students are being enrolled in schools (we have New Orleans’ students in this audience today), family members are being located, and problems are being solved. I saw these successes for myself when volunteering at the Atlanta Red Cross last week.

The system of relief, although strained to the extreme, has begun to deliver goods and services to those in need and money is still being raised. People have responded. Nearly $700 million dollars has been raised through formal channels, most of it in ways that depend upon the most complex of systems.

And let us note another system that did not falter or flinch. The National Weather Service kept everyone apprised of the storm and had its details right. Its members called and informed all levels of government that they were staring at a potential catastrophe.

Finally, we should note the fact that, other than the limitations imposed by technical collapses, there was no disruption in the flow of information about what was occurring. Television and radio reporters stayed on the scene relating the horrors to us. They reported the failings of those whose responsibility it was to initially prevent or minimize those horrors and then to address them. And at no time was the plug pulled on the reporters, on those who brought the glaring weaknesses of governments to the public eye of the world.

So please, while we look at what did not get done, let us at least keep a hint of reality about our analysis. But now: the bad news. Governments at all levels did not meet their responsibilities. Not the City of New Orleans, not the state of Louisiana, not the federal government. A full accounting of these failings must await a detailed analysis of the facts, since good facts are the key to good moral decisions.

Many things cannot be determined yet. Did the governor fail to act in requesting aid? Should the President have invoked the insurrection act allowing him to use military personnel in domestic policing (and what would all the good civil libertarians have said about that, especially if the hurricane had skirted New Orleans)? For me, the most important and disturbing fact is that the people empowered to make decisions were not getting the information they needed. How could Secretary Chertoff have not known the situation at the New Orleans Convention Center when it was being broadcast on television? What incompetent buffoon was acting as a gatekeeper and why?

Some failures, however, are troublingly clear:

- The City of New Orleans never even attempted to implement its evacuation plan (which can still be viewed on the city’s website). No attempt was made to use the available resources, including school buses, to evacuate people. Amtrak offered an empty train for evacuee use but was turned down by city officials. I could go on.
- The state government failed to act in a timely manner, to request help, or to give the green light to the federal government.
- The federal government had insufficient predeployment of troops, inadequate communications technology, and a failure of the command and control system required to obtain necessary information and use it.
- But what about you as citizens: where have you failed? What interest did you take in New Orleans’ infrastructure beforehand? In the importance of the Port of New Orleans? In Gulf oil platforms? What about your responsibility, your competence as citizens?

This event provides all of us with a learning opportunity. Not for the purpose of blaming, although those who failed should be held accountable, but for the purpose of learning. For that is also an ethical question. What do we need to do to minimize such failures in the future? For, we cannot end them.

On that note, I want to end with an extended quotation from Sunday’s New York Times Book Review because, although incompetence may be immorality, not all tragedies are due to incompetence. Much discussion, such as today’s, is taking place about the failures in procedures and planning, in order to determine responsibility.

“None of that should be ignored. But it is remarkable how this natural disaster slowly has come to be seen as a result of human agency, as if failures in planning were evidence of causality, as if forces of nature were subject to human oversight. The hurricane has been humanized.”

The author continued...

I do not wish to overemphasize this, of course; human actions are morally crucial. But this move represents a major shift in our views of the natural world. In a way, it inflates human knowledge. It extends scientific and political power into the realm of nature. It doesn’t really explain catastrophe, but it attempts to explain why we are forced to experience it: because of human failings.

There is a theology at work here, in the ways in which the reaction to natural catastrophe becomes political. Nature becomes something to be managed or mismanaged; it lies within the political order, not outside of it. My concern is
that all theodicies, if successful, do not overturn beliefs but confirm them. So, for many commentators, the hurricane and its aftermath provide confirmation of their previous doubts, whether they be about: the inefficiencies of bureaucrats and government, the current administration, or economic and social systems.

So, to return to my own conclusion, none of these responses will help us get at an understanding of how to do better next time. They only may make us to feel, like Lady Britomart, as though our consciences are clear and our duties done.

**Environmental Questions**

*Dr. Tracy Yandle*

Based in the Environmental Studies Department, I teach and conduct research on environmental policy. This means I have three broad areas that I am interested in. Moving from the broad to the more specific they are:

1) The interactions between the natural environment and the human environment
2) How government works
3) Natural resource management

The recent events in the gulf coast engage all of these areas, and have given me a lot to think about. At this stage, I find myself with many questions and few answers. So, I will simply share with you the questions I am struggling with as I think about Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

**How do we assess risks? How do we decide what to protect?**

In the last few weeks we’ve seen evacuations, levy failures, and flooding. How do we decide what to protect and how well to protect it? Like it or not, as a country we cannot protect ourselves against every possible natural disaster out there. Katrina was estimated to be a 1 in 100 year event. If we protect against that, how far do we go to protect against other possible natural disasters – for example retrofitting against earthquakes in San Francisco and Los Angeles? Tsunamis on the West Coast? What about other less publicized hazards like earthquakes in Boston? If we fully protect ourselves against all these threats, it would overwhelm us financially. Where do we want to take the money from? Education? Health care? Homeland Security? There is a limited amount we can do. How do we choose what we will do?

All of these questions focus on protecting humans and the human environment. What about the natural environment? What about eroding wetlands? Loss of biodiversity and habitat? How do we weight risks to the human environment versus the natural environment?

**New Staff Join Center Team**

**Amy Russell** joined the Center for Ethics on Monday, August 8 as the budget and human resource coordinator. A 1999 graduate of Clayton College and State University, where she completed a bachelor of business administration degree with a concentration in accounting, Russell is currently completing a master of business administration degree in accounting at the Keller Graduate School of Management.

In her role at the Center, she will manage Center accounts, assist the Director in the preparation and presentation of the Center’s annual budget, handle federal grants, and act as the liaison to the Human Resources department.

Amy replaces **Windy Clement**, who begins studies at the Woodruff School of Nursing this Fall.

**Adelle Frank** joined the Center for Ethics on Tuesday, September 6 as communications coordinator. A 2001 graduate of Manchester College, where she completed a bachelor of arts degree in religion and philosophy, Frank went on to complete a master of divinity degree at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology.

Frank will coordinate publicity for Center events, prepare the Center’s quarterly newsletters, oversee the various technological aspects of the Center’s functioning, and the Center’s website.

**Tamara White**, a sophomore at Emory College, will be our student office assistant. She is interested in business, and will most likely major in Finance and Marketing, with a minor in Spanish.

**Tiffany Patterson** is a M.Div. student at Candler School of Theology. She has a B.A. in Religious Studies from Florida Southern College. After obtaining her M.Div. degree, she plans to be a social justice advocate for the poor, marginalized, and oppressed in the world.
natural environment? At first these appear to be conflicting goals, but in the long term they are often complementary. For example, Louisiana (and much of the gulf coast) has lost significant amounts of wetlands in the last 30-50 years. These wetlands serve as a buffer during storms such as Katrina. How do we balance all these interests as we seek to assess and manage risks?

*What are the long term effects of the clean-up?*

As we speak, the toxic flood water from New Orleans is being pumped, untreated, into Lake Pontchartrain. This is a real dilemma. We don’t want this going into the lake, but we can’t leave people literally wading in this. What do we do? When do we sacrifice the environment and long-term human health for immediate (and very real) short term human health concerns? How do we make these choices?

Looking longer term, the New Orleans waste water and all the other flood water from the region is heading into a very complex and vulnerable ecosystem. This will not just effect the “wild” animals and plants living there. It will also have long term effects on fishing and other harvest industries. The hurricane smothered something like 90% of the oyster beds, fishing areas are changed or destroyed, and as the floodwaste continues to work its way through the ecosystem, it may well end up contaminating much of the seafood – particularly filtering organisms such as oysters or bottom-feeding species. Again, we see this balancing or juggling of environmental interests, long-term human interests, and immediate human needs.

*What is the Appropriate Role of Government in a Natural Disaster?*

As a nation, one of our great strengths is our founding principle of Federalism – the sharing of governmental power between the national, state, and local governments. It allows each level to concentrate on its strengths and at the level of localization that make the most sense. Yet in the case of Hurricane Katrina, we saw a catastrophic breakdown. So far we see the start of what I am sure will be an enormous amount of finger-pointing. At this stage, I am sure that there is more than enough blame to share at all levels of government. What we desperately need is answers to how this breakdown happened, and how to prevent it in the future.

*Why did FEMA Fail?*

Closely related to my previous questions is the failure of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). This agency, previously under James Lee Witt was an example of the strengths that the Federal Government could offer. Yet earlier this week, we all watched appalled as the current head appeared to not know about the conditions in the New Orleans Convention Center. How did this happen? Why?

A relatively uncharitable explanation offered by some commentators is that the appointment of an individual with little or no emergency management experience was the result of the current administration’s lack of respect for and understanding of the role of government in society.

Another possible explanation is that this failure is the result of moving FEMA from an independent agency to part of DHS (Department of Homeland Security). Such a fundamental change not only puts an agency into chaos for years, it hurt morale, and in this particular case, meant that FEMA was no longer a cabinet-level agency. As a result, there was a loss in stature, and a loss in access to the President and other decision-makers. These are competing explanations, and I am sure there are other explanations out there. We need to find out why FEMA failed to fix it (and prevent future failures), because there are important implications for all of public administration.

*Should We Re-Build New Orleans?*

This is a very uncomfortable question to ask, but we need to examine it none the less. In a book published 16 years ago (The Control of Nature. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), John McPhee documented the Army Corp of Engineers battle with the Mississippi River, and how without the Corps’ intervention neither the Mississippi nor New Orleans would be in their current location. It sounds harsh and it is harsh, but from a geology and hydrology perspective, New Orleans shouldn’t be in its current location.

But there are compelling reasons for keeping and re-building New Orleans. These include the trillions of dollars already invested in infrastructure – not only the city itself, but the levys and the 50+ mile port structure. There also is the important and unique culture of New Orleans - do we want to lose it? Finally, why are we asking this question about New Orleans, but we didn’t ask it about San Francisco in 1989? We immediately started re-building there at great expense and in the face of equally (if not more) overwhelming odds that there will be another catastrophic quake. This all leads straight back to my earlier questions about risk assessment.
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Professor, Departments of Psychology & Psychiatry, Graduate Program in Neuroscience
# Calendar of Events

## October

**Oct. 21, 7:00-9:00pm, Performing Arts Studio of the Burlington Road Building (1804 N. Decatur Road)**
**Art, Ethics, Activism: a conversation with Carrie Newcomer & Sal Brownfield**
See article on page 5 for more details.

**Oct. 25, 4:00-5:30pm, Room 170, Urban Life Bldg, GA State University College of Law (140 Decatur Street)**
**What does it mean to be human? The life and death of Terri Schiavo**
Co-sponsored with the Center for Law, Health & Society of the Georgia State University College of Law, this is the second in a series of three public seminars and will feature leading experts in science, religion, law and ethics.

## November

**Nov. 2, 7:00-8:30pm, Winship Ballroom, Dobbs University Center, Emory Campus**
**Graduate Professional Ethics Dinner**
Join other graduate students in the graduate and professional schools for a delicious dinner and conversation about professional ethics. Please RSVP to equeen@emory.edu

**Nov. 14, 4:00-5:30pm, Room 170, Urban Life Bldg, GA State University College of Law (140 Decatur Street)**
**What does it mean to be human? Creating human-nonhuman chimeras**
This seminar focuses on the scientific impetus and ethical/legal implications.

**Nov. 17, 10:00AM-4:00pm, Lenbrook Square Buckhead (3747 Peachtree Road NE)**
**Who's Going to be My Keeper? The Ethics of Health Care for an Aging Population**
Sponsored by the Health Care Ethics Consortium of Georgia.

## February

**Feb. 16, 8:00am-5:00pm, Saint Joseph's Health System (5665 Peachtree Dunwoody Road NE)**
**Ethics Committee Workshop**
Sponsored by the Health Care Ethics Consortium of Georgia.

**Feb. 23, 3:00-5:00pm, Room 864, Grace Crum Rollins Building (1518 Clifton Road)**
**The ethics of early phase research: Clinical Ethics Faculty Fellows Seminar**
Rebecca D. Pentz, PhD, Professor of Hematology and Oncology in Research Ethics, Winship Cancer Institute.

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