



**FLOOD  
SWEAT  
AND TEARS**

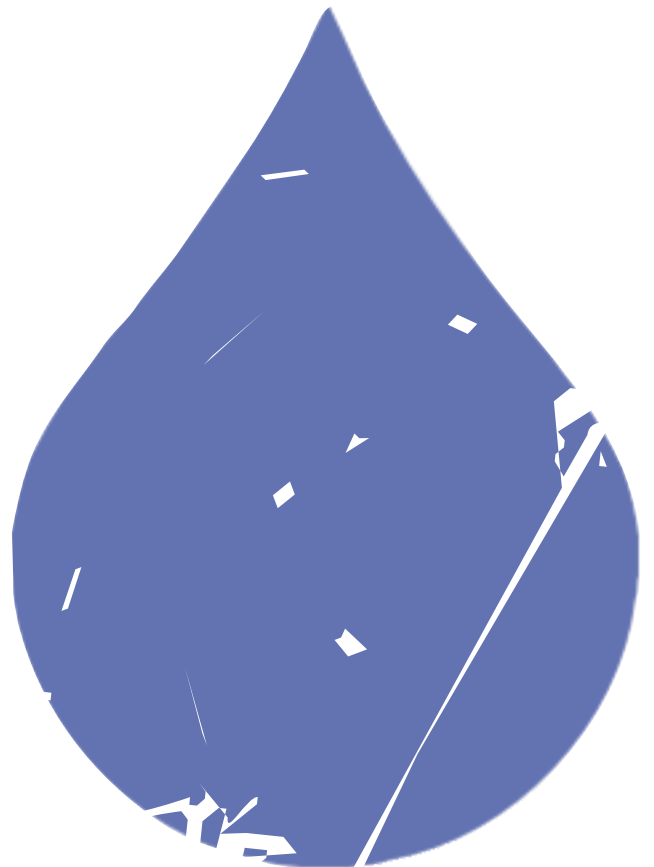
**STORIES FROM THE DELUGE**

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

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**HOUSE  
ORGAN  
JUNE 2010**

**[WWW.MC.VANDERBILT.EDU/HOUSEORGAN](http://WWW.MC.VANDERBILT.EDU/HOUSEORGAN)**



# RISING

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“Voices from the Flood” items taken from comments posted to the News and Communications blog, Get the NAC:

<http://getthenac.wordpress.com/>

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BY WAYNE WOOD

The woman who called Vanderbilt’s Flood Recovery and Coordination Center was clear about her situation. Her house, she said, was uninhabitable.

She reported that everything in her garage was a total loss, and that in her house she had lost walls, roof, subfloors and carpets, kitchen table and some clothes and shoes. She was relying on family and friends for immediate help, and was hoping for some future help from FEMA, but wasn’t sure about that yet.

Then she said this, about any help that her employer, Vanderbilt, might be prepared to offer: “I want to make sure the people that lost much more than me to benefit from things before I receive anything.”

The spirit of Nashville that was on display through the catastrophic flooding on May 1 and 2—neighbor helping neighbor, a selfless sense of sacrifice, a willingness to pitch in and get started with the cleanup, while also welcoming help—was also on display at Vanderbilt, which, is, after all, Nashville’s largest private employer.

As it became apparent that catastrophic flooding was happening all over the region as more than 13 inches of rain fell in two days, Vanderbilt first activated its Incident Command Center

to deal with flooding in the basements of some buildings and to make sure that patients would be cared for and that clinical areas were adequately staffed through the disaster.

And then, over the next few days, the immediate threat to Medical Center operations faded, and it became swiftly apparent that the flood had affected a staggering number of Vanderbilt’s family personally.

About 70 Vanderbilt employees reported that their residence was totally destroyed in the flood; almost 300 reported, in the first days after the flood, that their residence was uninhabitable but salvageable; and more than 500 others reported having a livable residence with damage exceeding \$5,000.

The Flood Recovery and Coordination Center, with representation from many parts of the University, took over the Incident Command Center and began simultaneously gathering information and communicating University and community flood news to the Vanderbilt community.

In order to gather information, the Employee Needs Assessment Survey was created using the University’s own Redcap survey tool. This allowed both employees and supervisors to report



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about the flood's impact on hundreds of employees. Volunteers began phoning back some of the most affected individuals to assess need and help match those needs with available support.

At the same time, the flood website [www.vanderbilt.edu/flood](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/flood) was established and became the clearinghouse for both University and community information about the flood. Over the next two weeks, the site would have more than 125,000 hits. Special flood editions of the electronic publications MyVU and MyVUMC were produced, highlighting each day's news and developments.

And especially in those early days the news and developments came fast:

- University leaders decided to offer a disaster pay benefit that would provide up to two weeks paid leave to faculty,

staff and trainees whose personal residences were destroyed or otherwise rendered uninhabitable on May 1-2. The paid time off is over and above accrued vacation or personal time.

- An online Vanderbilt Flood Relief Fund was established. All monies donated are tax deductible; to give, visit: [www.vanderbilt.edu/flood/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/flood/)
- A Flood Relief Swap Meet was held May 6 and 7, allowing items such as clothing, housewares, and cleaning supplies to be supplied to flood victims free of charge.
- A free online classifieds page allowed those with items to share to list those, and those in need to be matched to the items.
- Vanderbilt Employees' Credit Union stepped up to offer special flood relief

loans, payment extensions on existing credit union loans; and appliances loans up to \$5,000.

- Work/Life Connections-EAP offered help to individuals through its Employee Hardship Fund, and at the same time began offering counseling and referral for those affected by the flood. The number to call is 936-1327.

There were countless examples of small (and large) unofficial acts of Vanderbilt people helping each other and helping their communities.

In this issue are a few examples of the flood's impact on Vanderbilt and its employees. This is not in any way meant to be comprehensive, but in these stories we begin a mosaic of Vanderbilt's story and Nashville's story of those days when the rain came and the water rose.



COURTESY CHRIS CAREY

Vanderbilt resident Chris Carey's Bellevue home, with [inset] one of his children's books. See full story p.7.



# BARBARA MCCAFFERTY

## Digestive Disease Clinic

BY DAGNY STUART

"These amazing people came out of nowhere. Churches, neighbors, volunteers from Hands on Nashville were all just amazingly generous and kind. My Vanderbilt family has been just incredible, showing up with buckets, gloves and hammers."



JOE HOWELL

Barbara McCafferty and husband Dave Paczko



One of the hardest things Barbara McCafferty's family has endured in recent years is her husband's cancer. The Vanderbilt post-op assessment nurse in the Digestive Disease Clinic has been by husband Dave Paczko's side during 27 operations on his hip, pelvis and thigh, operations that have left him with still-healing wounds, forcing him to use crutches and a scooter to get around.

Cancer is a tough opponent, but the couple had moved into a sprawling one-level home near Percy Warner Park that accommodated his needs. The Little Harpeth River was several hundred yards away, down a 12-foot embankment. Life appeared to be improving.

Then came the Nashville rains.

"We got up early that Sunday morning and saw water about a foot away from the back of our house," remembered McCafferty. "I called the Williamson County Sheriff's Office and asked if there was an evacuation plan. I explained that I had a husband with disabilities. They told me to call back when it was a matter of life and death."

Two teenage boys from the neighborhood were soon banging on the home's front door.

"I don't know where they came from but they were frantic to get us out," said McCafferty. "Neighbors got our car started and moved it to higher ground."

Water started entering the house through "every vent, every drain, every bathroom." McCafferty called county EMTs for help.

"Suddenly the water just pushed the front door open. Pretty soon it was up to our chests. I remember two men coming and picking me up under the arms and pulling me through the water and they did the same with Dave."

Once in the car, the couple tried to drive out of the neighborhood, but every few yards the car would stall. A woman McCafferty calls an angel knocked on the window of their car and took them into her home, offering dry clothes until the water receded and the couple could get to a friend's condo. Those frantic hours now seem like a blur. But what happened in the days after the deluge is as clear as the prized crystal stemware McCafferty lost in the flood.

"These amazing people came out of nowhere. Churches, neighbors, volunteers from Hands on Nashville were all just amazingly generous and kind. My Vanderbilt family has been just incredible, showing up with buckets, gloves and hammers," said a tearful McCafferty. "They boxed up our stuff, ripped out carpet, drywall, cabinets and hardwood floors. They brought industrial dehumidifiers and box fans to try to dry out the house. Now the house is just down to the studs."

Like so many other Nashville flood victims, the couple didn't have flood insurance. They lost Dave's scooter, medications and dressings for his wound and nearly everything else in the house. They don't know if they will be able to rebuild or where they will go from here.

So they focus on one of the few positive aspects of the experience—the kindness of strangers.

"I am so grateful to people whose names I don't even know."

# ARTHUR LAWSON

## Environmental Services

BY JESSICA ENNIS

**A**rthur Lawson, an environmental tech at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, relies on Metro's bus service to get to work from his home near Historic Edgefield in East Nashville.

Due to flooding in the basement of Children's Hospital on May 2, he was called in to work early to help clean up the mess.

He walked the three blocks to his bus stop but the bus never came.

**All in all, he walked more than five miles in the downpour for two hours before making it to work 15 minutes before his shift began.**

"I thought, I'm in trouble," Lawson said. "I called and said I'm running late but that I would be there. I just started walking."

Along the way, police officers made him turn around as he approached Memorial Bridge by the Titans stadium, so he found another way and crossed the pedestrian bridge. He wound his way down Hermitage Avenue and back to Edgefield Avenue, where he hit 21st

Avenue for the last leg of his journey to Children's Hospital.

"I got there just before the roadblocks," Lawson said. "I made it on time!"

All in all, he walked more than five miles in the downpour for two hours before making it to work 15 minutes before his shift began.

"I tried to dry off, and then they asked us to grab mop buckets and squeegees and clean the water up."

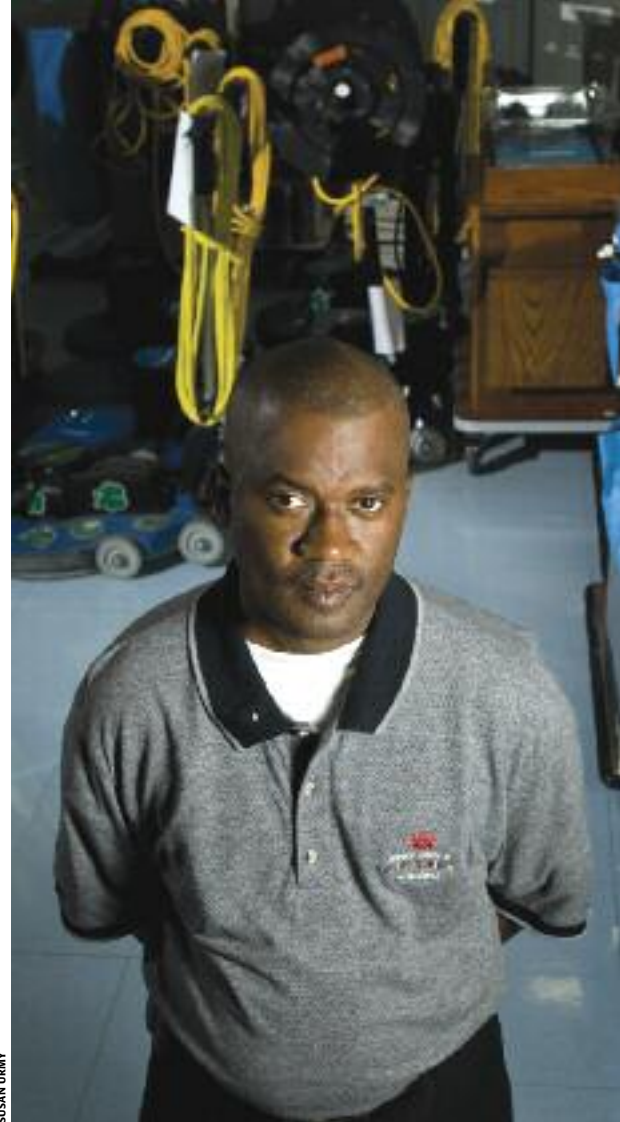
Lawson's supervisor, Sharon Boyd, director of Environmental Services at Children's Hospital, was overwhelmed with his dedication to his job.

"He walked a long way. He was determined he was going to get here," she said. "He's a real team player. I love my team."

Lawson, who just began to work for Environmental Services full time in mid-April, said he was able to catch a ride home when his shift ended at 11:30 p.m. that night.

But not every night. Two weeks after the flood, buses were still operating on a "Saturday" schedule, and, unbeknownst to his co-workers, Lawson continued walking home on several nights after he quietly clocked out.

"It's worth it," he said.



### Voices from the Flood



May 7: Imagine four feet of water in your home that is a combination of sewage flowing out of your toilets and muddy river/creek water. Now try to visualize everything that lives below four-feet in your home: drywall, paneling, books, CDs, DVDs, chest-of-drawers, mattresses, beds, toys, clothes, rugs, hardwood floors, tile, HVAC system, HVAC duct-work, photographs,

electronics, piano, refrigerator, washer and dryer, tools, pet food and pet supplies, dishwasher, garbage disposal, trash cans, couches, chairs, floor lamps, and the list goes on...such as privacy fences, decks, outdoor grills, etc, etc.

Now imagine realizing that 85 percent of all everything I listed is/was destroyed when you arrive home, and you'll know what my Sunday afternoon was like on May 2.

The flood did not care what it destroyed, whether it was irreplaceable due to senti-

mental reasons or if it was junk that needed to be thrown out.

However, I can say that it feels good to work for a business/institution that cares about its employees, and this caring was evident to me from the responses/reactions from the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and other leaders of our great University. I returned to work today, Friday, after spending four days salvaging and cleaning and was pleasantly surprised to read the responses from our Administration. Thank you.

—Luke Beauchamp





# BARBARA CARR

## Plant Operations, Peabody

BY JESSICA PASLEY

front door to alert emergency personnel that she needed help. All the while, she tried to calm the nerves of her 87-year-old mother.

Luckily a neighbor who owned a boat was headed her way. And just in time—as they were evacuating her home the flood waters covered her car.

“My biggest concern was my mother,” said Carr. “She’s terrified of water. I am so thankful for my neighbors. They talked to her and kept her mind off the water while getting her out safely. My entire home was flooded.

“We lost everything, but we made it through. Things could have been very different because one or both of us could have perished.”

Carr, who has been at Vanderbilt for 21 years, is a supervisor in housekeeping and building services. She is thank-

ful for help her colleagues have offered.

“Vanderbilt has really stood by us through all of this,” she said. “Whatever they could do, they did.”

Carr said she was required to get flood insurance when she purchased her home 11 years ago.

“It was so expensive,” Carr said. “I had them include it in my house note so that I wouldn’t have to think so much about how much it cost. But now, I’m thinking it was a blessing.”

Carr and her mother are living with her daughter until her home is repaired.

“This was really devastating to me,” said Carr. “To see it happen on TV to other people doesn’t compare. When it hits you, it’s hard to stand there and watch your belongings being overtaken by water.”

**“We lost everything, but we made it through. Things could have been very different because one or both of us could have perished.”**

SUSAN UHRY

**O**n Sunday, May 2, Barbara Carr’s mind was racing. She wasn’t sure what her next move was going to be.

She had already moved her car to a higher elevation in her yard. She stayed in constant communication with her neighbors—yelling from house to house concerned about the rising waters. She had placed a towel on her

# KARL BOEHME

## Pediatric Infectious Diseases

BY DOUG CAMPBELL

**S**cientific research is a methodical, incremental, team-driven process. So too, Karl Boehme, Ph.D., learned, is coping with a catastrophic flood. With the water rising fast in their Bellevue subdivision that rain-soaked Sunday, Boehme and his wife, Kathy, loaded up their children, Charlotte, 5, and Nathan, 3, and evacuated at 6 a.m. As they left, they knocked on neighbors’ doors to wake them up and urged them to head for higher ground.

Barely making it out of the neighborhood before the roads became impassable, the family headed for safety, specifically the conference room in Medical Center North for the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, where Boehme is a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Terence Dermody, M.D.

They spent the rest of the day there before going to stay with a friend. It was Tuesday morning before they could make it back to their house to assess the

damage, which was extensive, as water had risen to three feet inside the home.

At that point the plan, and the team, kicked into high gear.

Most of his colleagues from the lab came to help. Ten people worked in shifts to haul out furniture, cut drywall, tear out insulation and rip out flooring, and by the end of the day Wednesday, May 5, the house was clear and the drying-out process was under way. He gets dry with a little help from his friends.

“Our friends have been fantastic, and the support from the community and everyone else has been phenomenal,” Boehme said. “This is not a one-man job. It takes a team, and it’s inspiring to see people come together like they have.”

Dealing with the enormity of the situation is difficult, to say the least. The key, Boehme said, is to take care of one thing at a time.

“All you can do is plunge into the work. Focus on a task, get it done and move on to

**“This is not a one-man job. It takes a team, and it’s inspiring to see people come together like they have.”**

the next task. If you try to think of the big picture, it’s easy to get lost.”

Boehme and his family are living in a temporary apartment until their house is rebuilt, which he hopes will be finished within a few months.



MINE INTELLER

Some of Boehme’s team, left to right: Derrick Christopher, Charles Tessier, Karl Boehme, Josh Doyle, Bernardo Mainou, Carolline Lai, Jennifer Konopka, Magda Bokiej and Jason Iskarpatyoti.

# CHRIS CAREY

## Surgery

BY JESSICA PASLEY

In August 2009, Chris Carey, M.D., a general surgery resident at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, lost his wife of 13 years, Niki. She died 38 months after a diagnosis of liver cancer.

So when the 500-year flood of 2010, that devastated the Midstate, threatened his family's home, he took it all in stride.

"It was all out of my control," said Carey. "I learned that when Niki had cancer."

He salvaged as much as he could of his family's belongings, including pre-

cious photos of his late wife, before evacuating his one-story Bellevue home.

"I loaded pictures, the kids, the dogs and files into the car and I was going try to drive out," said Carey. "But we were trapped on the street because of the flooding. I unloaded the kids and carried them through the water to safety."

"I returned to the Trailblazer and drove it through to drier land. I tried for over an hour to get out of Bellevue but all the roads were flooded."

Carey left the children, Conner, 9, and Kilyn, 6, with neighbors. Then he and his fiancée Deanna Chapman waded through the knee deep water back to his home.

"I just started throwing clothes into trash bags, grabbed the kids' trophies and a portrait of my wife. It all went into the attic. Everything I could grab I threw into the attic."

"We were running around the house getting things. It was finally up to my waist. Everything was floating. I could no longer see our fence which was 6 feet tall. We knew we had to get out."

Carey, who is 6 feet tall, said the water was up to his chest and dangerously high on Deanna as they were making their way out of the house.

When he returned the next day, he found that everything in the attic was safe despite the more than 5 feet of water still standing in the house.

Even more trouble: just one week after the flood hit Nashville, he found himself in the middle of an F-4 tornado that struck Oklahoma City. There were several fatalities and structural damage reported in the area, he said. Luckily he and his children walked away unscathed.

"At that point, all I could do was laugh at it all," said Carey "It was just unbelievable. I told my buddy that I might need to go to church more often or something."

"When I look back at it, it was all stressful but you have to keep going. You can't do much about it and there is always someone who has it harder than I do."



Surgical resident Chris Carey, with children Kilyn and Conner, and fiancée Deanna Chapman.

Now that the children have returned to school and work is beginning on the restoration of his home, things are settling down and returning to normal, said Carey.

But the events of the past weeks have left him with a few existential questions, he said.

"I mean the Thursday before the flood, my little girl decides that Dr. Seuss was not challenging enough and she went to her room and brought back the children's Bible."

"Here we are reading about Noah," he said chuckling. "Now that I look back on it all, it's like, umm, next time could you speak a little bit clearer to me and could you cut me some slack?"

Carey will complete his residency at Vanderbilt in July. He plans to move to Oklahoma City.



COURTESY CHRIS CAREY

### Voices from the Flood



May 5: Last night, I sat in the backyard of several of the fabulous neighbors in our Bellevue neighborhood. We ate our burgers and hot dogs, washed them down with a

beer, laughed and told stories for hours. We were soul-weary and body-weary after spending the day clearing out water soaked memories, ruined mementos and dirt caked dreams. Some of us were still covered in the foul mud that crept into our homes and the homes of our neighbors. As we talked away the daylight, I felt so grateful for my community. Grateful for the neighbors who banded together when cut off from the rest of the world by raging waters. Grateful for the homes that were spared. Grateful that my neighborhood knows each other; called to wake those in danger; rescued folks from their front porches by boat; checked on the homes of those not home. Grateful that we support each other physically and emotionally. We left each other last night as the sun left the sky all a little more full in the soul than when we had arrived.

I share my good neighbors with the Vanderbilt community. My great neighborhood is also yours.

—Paige Moore

"I loaded pictures, the kids, the dogs and files into the car and I was going try to drive out. But we were trapped."



# GARY NEAL

## Plant Operations, Peabody

BY JESSICA PASLEY

As the water was rising on the street in front of Gary Neal's Inglewood home, he created his own measuring stick of sorts.

He told himself—"If the water gets to the fourth step of my front porch I am getting out of here."

Within minutes of checking his backyard for flooding Neal dashed to get a look at his front steps—they were covered.

"I grabbed my gym bag and I just said 'I'm outta here,'" recalled Neal. "I had been watching the continuous rain for two days. The water was slowly rising, but then things happened so fast. The next thing you know, it was getting high.

"I jumped in the water. It was waist deep. I began walking up the street to get to the hill. I really had to push my way through the water. All of my neighbors were standing at the top of the hill watching our cars, trucks and homes being submerged by the water.

"I remember how quiet it was. To see the devastation, it was taking everything with it and it was just so quiet."

Neal has been with Vanderbilt for 23 years. He is a building services supervisor. Nothing he has done on campus pre-

pared him for what he experienced on May 2. And once he was allowed to return to his home—he was overwhelmed. The water stood a foot and a half deep inside his home.

But he says he was one of the lucky ones because he had flood insurance.

He applauds his neighbors, the Nashville community and Vanderbilt for coming to the aid of homeowners impacted by the historic flood.

"I will say, that in time of disaster, you would be surprised at how helpful people are," he said. "People did what came naturally – which is helping each other."

It was days before the water receded enough for him to return home.

"Walking back into my house, the stench from the river was..." he paused. "I just remember that everything was soaking wet, everything that touched the floor was gone. I remember thinking items can be replaced.

"I just thank God for my life. Life cannot be replaced," he said. "And those things that I treasured and were sentimental? God is giving me a second chance to make new memories."



"All of my neighbors were standing at the top of the hill watching our cars, trucks and homes being submerged by the water."

SUSAN URMY

## VENDOR GOES THE EXTRA MILE



COURTESY RICHARD GIBBS SR.

A-L Compressed Gases employees James Childress, Randy McKinley, Neff Murillo and Floyd Long retrieve medical gas cylinders from the company's flooded facilities near downtown Nashville. The company had lost its delivery trucks, filling plant, and store to the flood, but worked with neighboring companies Volunteer Welding and Nex-air to see that the vital supply of medical gases needed by Vanderbilt continued. Richard Gibbs Sr., A-L's president, called the employees who worked to retrieve and deliver the cylinders "heroes of the day."



# HAROLD "COOKIE" WARPOOL

## Plant Services

BY SARAH PLUMRIDGE

**H**arold "Cookie" Warpool, an employee in Department of Plant Services Paint Shop, was, of all things, standing on the roof of his house checking the gutters Sunday morning when he was called into work.

Right away, it was not looking like a routine day; it usually takes Warpool about 10 minutes to drive to Vanderbilt. With flooding streets it took him an hour to drive through side roads to reach the Medical Center.

"I've been working here 24 years and we've had floods, but nothing like this. The workers that we were trying to call in to help us couldn't get in because the roads were blocked. We were kind of like, 'What are we going to do? What are we going to do with this water?'" he said.

His first priority was fixing the drain pipe that had burst on the first floor of the Emergency Department, shutting down two patient rooms. When that was under control, with the help of workers from the Plumbing Shop and several wet vacs, it took about seven hours to clean up the ED.

While walking through the basements of The Vanderbilt Clinic, he said the only thing on his mind was making sure water wasn't going to keep rising, and to protect the offices, clinics and millions of dollars of equipment. The Metro Fire Department was even called in to help pump out water.

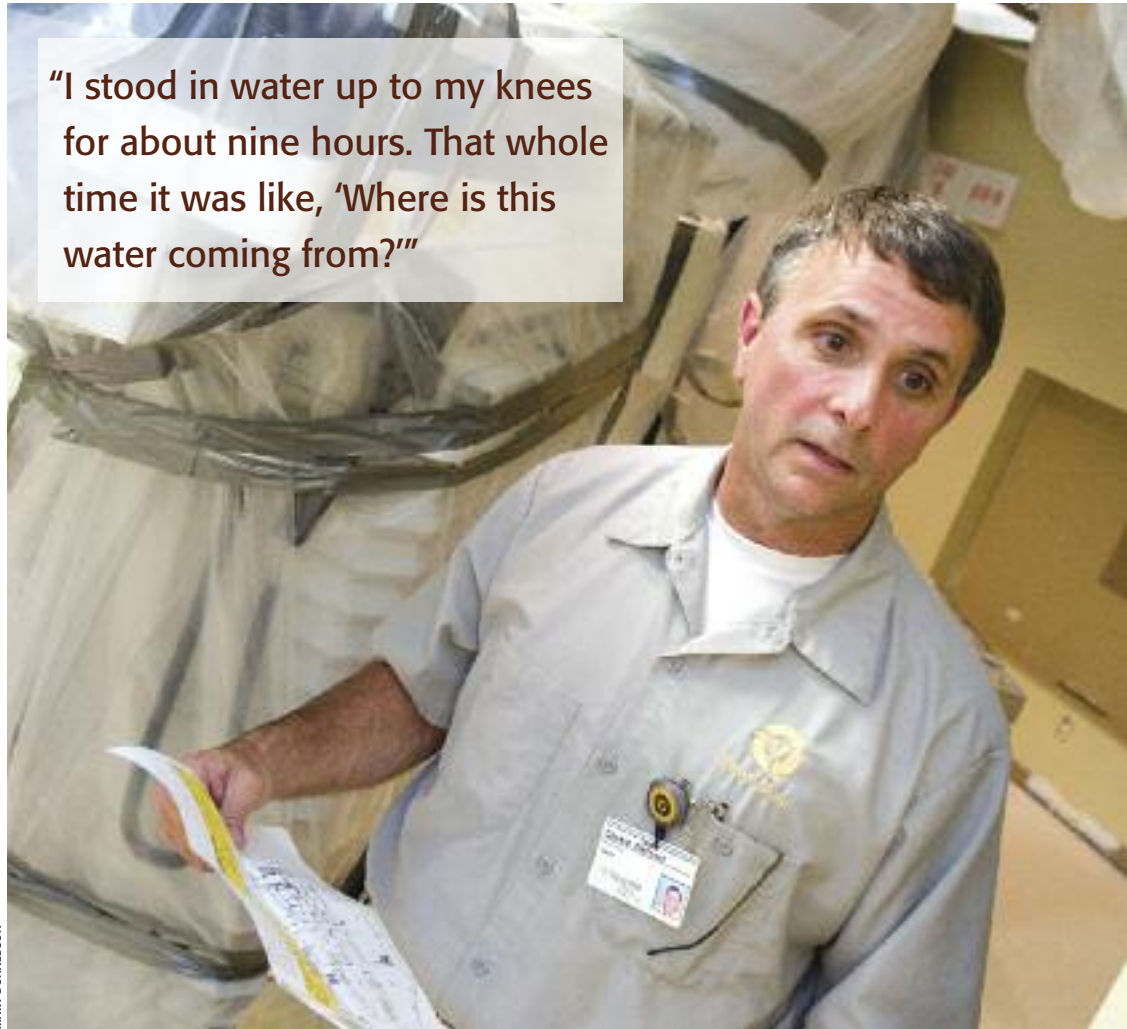
"I stood in water up to my knees for about nine hours. That whole time it was like, 'Where is this water coming from?' I was more confused than anything and thinking is it ever going to go down."

As he walked from the flooded TVC basement through the hospital tunnels Warpool recalls water rolling down the hallways to Children's Hospital.

"The water traveled through the tunnels to Children's Hospital because it was the only way for the water to go, running downhill. It was pretty wild."

In some areas of the basement, the flooding reached four feet. Since the flood, Vanderbilt and contracted staff have been working together nonstop to repair damages, strip carpets, replace

"I stood in water up to my knees for about nine hours. That whole time it was like, 'Where is this water coming from?'"



MARY DONALDSON

vinyl and repaint walls. Truckloads of furniture have been cleared out to be cleaned and sanitized.

"It is a challenge to us and it is a lot of work. Carpenters, electricians, painters, area maintenance, plumbers, HAR and [Special Equipment Repair] shops, everyone has to work together. The damage is pretty devastating, but we clean it up, fix it up and get it back in shape," Warpool said.

"I am really proud of the people I am working with, putting in 12 or 15 hours a day. By the time you go home you don't have a whole lot of time to do anything else and you come back in the next day. I think we have done a good job."

Warpool and his colleagues received effusive thanks for their tireless works in all parts of Vanderbilt. One example came from Terrell Smith, director of Patient and Family Centered Care.

"They've been everywhere day and night (but they always are and we just don't notice) helping us to get clinics

and classrooms repaired. They have been pleasant, helpful and very efficient," she said.

### Voices from the Flood



May 5: Nearly 5 years ago, my sister evacuated here after losing everything to Katrina. Today, she's back at my place after the flood in Bellevue took out her first

floor and car. But it's different now. Although, like everyone else, there's no insurance, we're really struck by how much everyone at work, friends and neighbors really want to help. Thank you, Nashville!

—Mimi Eckhard



# SANDRA DAVIS-CARTER

## Program in Human Simulation

BY LESLIE HAST

Even though she doesn't really want to think about water levels anymore, Sandra Davis-Carter says her glass is definitely half full.

The floods left seven feet of muddy water in her Madison home, but she has found many silver linings and put a positive spin on her personal devastation.

"My husband wouldn't have ever torn up that house for me to redo it. It took a flood to get to remodel it the way I want it," said Davis-Carter, administrative assistant in the Program in Human Simulation.

On a more serious note, she is thankful that she and her husband, Robert Carter, Ph.D., a former faculty member and now chair of the Department of Science at Volunteer State Community College, both have jobs and the means to rebuild.

She also learned about the wider economic impact from temporary workers with the clean-up company Servpro.

"Many of the workers cleaning up our home said they hadn't worked in six to nine months," she said. "The stores will be increasing their sales and labor-

ers who couldn't find work can now feed their families and pay some bills. Our disaster is their blessing."

Davis-Carter also has a new grandchild—her first—to celebrate. He was born two days before the flood and had to spend time in an intensive care unit, but is now home and getting healthier every day.

Davis-Carter and her husband live on Denson Avenue in Madison, a street that dead-ends at a normally small creek. As the rains fell, she took photos charting the creek's progress over its four-foot banks, over backyard fences, over a neighbor's swimming pool, almost topping the rim of a basketball goal. They kept moving their cars to higher ground and eventually decided it was time to get themselves and their three dogs to safety.

She swears she keeps a good house, but the flood made it look like a slob had moved in. Heavy wooden furniture and the refrigerator were toppled over. A shoe somehow made it on top of the kitchen counter. Items once neatly stacked on shelves were strewn on the

**"I had to wade through waist-deep water to get into the house, and of course I was screaming because it was nasty, but I had to see the inside."**



MARY DONALDSON

floor. A visible line on the walls, windows and curtains marks how high the water reached.

"I had to wade through waist-deep water to get into the house, and of course I was screaming because it was nasty, but I had to see the inside," she said.

It took three days to empty the house and try to salvage what they could—CDs and DVDs, a glass desk, some clothing.

On demolition day, she ripped out many of the walls herself but also had help from her boss, Lisa Rawn, director of Program in Human Simulation, and her husband's boss, Nancy Morris, dean of the Math and Science division at Volunteer State Community College.

"We want to thank our bosses and all of our co-workers, friends and family members, too many to name, all who did not hesitate to come help clean-up our flooded home for many hours over several days," she said.

Davis-Carter says she is a good businesswoman and her time at Vanderbilt in facilities planning and administrative management will help her find a good contractor. She's ready to start rebuilding and get to that remodeling job she always wanted.

*Sandra Davis-Carter's house was inundated. Note the basketball goal almost covered to the backboard to the left.*





# JEANINE PRUSINOWSKI

## Hematology/Oncology



BY NANCY HUMPHREY

There's a mountain of debris still stacked in front of Jeanine Prusinowski's Bellevue home. It contains the drywall that sheltered her family, the carpet that warmed their feet, everything from her kitchen, and Christmas decorations made over the past decade by her children.

It's a daily reminder of all her family lost on May 2, but that's not the way she chooses to see it.

Instead, Prusinowski, a hematology/oncology nurse on 11 North, sees the flood and its aftermath as a blessing. Because once the flood waters receded and they re-entered their devastated home, the volunteers poured in.

Their subdivision is near the Harpeth River as well as a man-made lake. On the Monday after the flood, she and her husband found chest-high water in their garage and about 8 inches of water throughout the downstairs of their home.

It was an overwhelming sight. But as they were assessing the damage, 15 volunteers from Bellevue's Cross Point Church walked in.

"We didn't know them, but they live in our neighborhood and they came to help."

And the volunteers kept coming. A waitress from the restaurant where Prusinowski drinks coffee each Saturday morning read about the flood on Prusinowski's Facebook page and came with three friends to remove baseboard and drywall.

"We have been so blessed. I think you forget how many lives you touch," Prusinowski said.

On Sunday, May 2, as the waters came closer, she told her children—Kevin, 10; Kyle, 8, Keegan, 6, and Kyra, 4—to "pack like we were going to the emergency room." The family is familiar with quick trips to the E.R., so her children knew to take a few things to keep them occupied. Ten minutes later, things were getting worse, so she changed the packing plan to "overnight."

Before leaving, she handed family photos and some of her children's books to her oldest son, and told him to take them upstairs. As they fled, she grabbed some bottled water, granola bars, a "very deli-



Jeanine Prusinowski, her husband Jude, and their children L-R, Kevin, Keegan, Kyra and Kyle with some of the debris from their flooded house.

icious" chocolate bundt cake and a raw pork loin for Sunday night's dinner. They drove to a friend's nearby home and stayed for three days. They ate well.

After they had settled the children at their friend's home, she and her husband returned to home in the afternoon, where they found water up to the mailboxes. They couldn't get inside. "It was awful not to be able to get to our house, and wondering what was happening inside," Prusinowski said.

The next morning they found out. "I've never been in a flood before. I didn't know how devastating it would be," she said. It's not the large losses, like all of her husband's power tools, or all the kitchen contents, that affect her most. It's the smaller things—her son's composition books, the hand-

made Christmas decorations, the mixing bowl that she and her daughter used when they baked.

The family had no flood insurance, but received some money from FEMA. They are focusing on the kindness of the volunteers. The family will rebuild, "because we know we belong here."

Prusinowski, who sprained her wrist the day after the flood helping an elderly neighbor clear debris, chokes up when she talks about the surprise that awaited her when she went to the YMCA for her regular exercise class after the flood. When she checked in, she was told that her membership had anonymously been paid for the summer.

"It's awesome for our kids to see all these people who have come to help us. That's what they are going to remember."

# KIA CHURCHWELL

## Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center

BY KATHY WHITNEY

There were fish in Kia Churchwell's house. Minnows from the Cumberland River were swimming through her living room, carried along by the rising water that spilled from the river banks into her Shelby Park-area house.

Churchwell, a patient care technician in the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, left her home on Sunday night, May 2, around 11 p.m. when the water began to rise in her yard. She, her husband and their four daughters, ages 9 months to 14 years, headed for a hotel figuring they'd return on Monday to a soggy yard. Their pit bull, Cane, stayed behind in the fenced back yard, and they assumed, at worst, his feet would get wet.

**"The first day I got there it was really hard. I just kind of lost it."**



"I got a call on Monday morning from a neighbor. She said, 'We have a canoe so you can rescue your dog.'"

"We rushed out there. He was stuck on the porch.

"My husband rode the canoe to rescue the dog. I jumped in the water and tried to save as much stuff as I could. It got two and a half feet deep in the house."

They took the dog and what few belongings they could carry and left again, this time knowing their home would never be the same.

Returning to their house after the water receded was difficult. The Churchwells lost everything except a sofa they were able to salvage.

"The first day I got there it was really hard. I just kind of lost it," she said. "I sucked it up and knew there were things that had to be done. I brought my co-worker over to see it, and I kept think-



COURTESY KIA CHURCHWELL



SUSAN UBRNY

*Inset: As water engulfed the family's East Nashville home, Churchwell's husband Broderick and a neighbor rescued the family dog, Cane, by canoe.*

ing it wasn't that bad. I guess I was in denial. She was like, 'This is bad. You need to face it.' As I looked around I said, 'OK, it's bad.'"

At first the Churchwells stayed at the Ramada Inn in Donelson. Then they moved in with a sister-in-law. Her daughters stayed at an aunt's house so they could get to school more easily.

With the help of volunteers, her house was gutted, preparing for restoration. Meanwhile, her "good car" broke down, so she was catching a ride to work each day. Still, co-workers describe her as a glass-half-full kind of person.

"Something's going to have to give," Churchwell sighed, and then added, "It's going to work out."

# XIWU CHEN

## Medicine

BY NANCY HUMPHREY

Xiwu Chen, M.D., Ph.D., was awakened at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 2, by loud, persistent knocking at his door in Bellevue.

He ignored the knocking at first, then decided to open the door—it was a hooded neighbor, standing in the rain, telling Chen, a research assistant professor of Medicine in Ambra Pozzi's Nephrology lab, to get out of his home as soon as he could. The waters of the Harpeth River were rising. He woke his wife and two daughters, 12 and 8, they grabbed some important files, and by the time they left the water had risen a foot.

"The water was rising so quickly that if we had tried to save some things, we wouldn't have been able to get out of our neighborhood," Chen recalls. The family parked in the parking lot of the Bellevue Sam's Club, and tried to drive back about 9 a.m. The roads were closed

and there was no way back.

Chen and his family spent the entire day inside Sam's, eating lunch and passing the time.

A friend who lived in Green Hills called him later that day, and offered Chen and his family a place to stay.

The next day Chen returned to the home. When he opened the garage it was caked with mud and shoes and tools were tossed throughout. Inside the home, the scene was just as disturbing. A sofa had moved from one side of the room to the other, coming to rest on a table. "We lost almost everything, everything except our clothes."

Chen's Vanderbilt lab co-workers came on Monday and Tuesday to help, and other volunteers from the community and churches showed up, too. His daughters' teachers from Meigs Middle School and Harpeth Valley Elementary came to

**Chen and his family spent the entire day inside Sam's, eating lunch and passing the time.**

help, and brought gift cards. "It was really nice. There was great support from the community and from the people around us—my lab, our community, old friends and new friends."

Chen and his family had no flood insurance, but got some support from FEMA. "We want to rebuild and get back to our normal life."

But, looking back, the most frightening experience of the flood wasn't getting his family out safely; it was coming back to their home to find everything ruined.

"Sunday morning I was pretty confident I could get us out. I just didn't expect the damage to be so huge when we came back. I thought 'a flood is a flood. It's some water.' I had no idea what things were going to be like until we got back into the house."



# LINDA STEWART

## Biostatistics

BY WAYNE WOOD

As floodwaters lapped at the porch of her Old Hickory home, Linda Stewart saw a rescue boat pull up, and faced a choice. The boat already had a dog in it, and she was told that dogs from different homes did not mix in a small boat; she could get in the boat if she left her dogs behind, or wait for another boat later.

It wasn't even really a decision. Stewart was not going to leave her dogs at home in the rising waters, so she waited, and a firefighter stayed with her until a boat that could rescue the whole family came. It was 9:45 Sunday night, May 2, when Stewart, along with Kobe the peekapoo, Summer the poodle mix, Niki

the Pomeranian, and Sasha the schnauzer-Yorkie mix made their way to safety by police boat.

"You would not believe how quickly the water rose," she said. "I had no warning."

On the other side of the normally small, scenic lake in her subdivision, ironically named Waterford, waited Stewart's sister and brother-in-law.

Three days later, she was able to return to find a severely damaged house and a totaled car, but luckily she did have flood insurance that will cover much of the loss.

And she has her dogs, which are temporarily settled with her in a pet-friendly residence hotel in Madison.



COURTESY LINDA STEWART

Stewart and her four dogs were rescued from her Old Hickory front porch by boat, and are living at a local hotel.

"I am so grateful to Vanderbilt, for the community, for family support," she says. "Church groups brought food, the Red Cross...it's amazing."

She could get in the boat if she left her dogs behind, or wait for another boat later. It wasn't even really a decision.

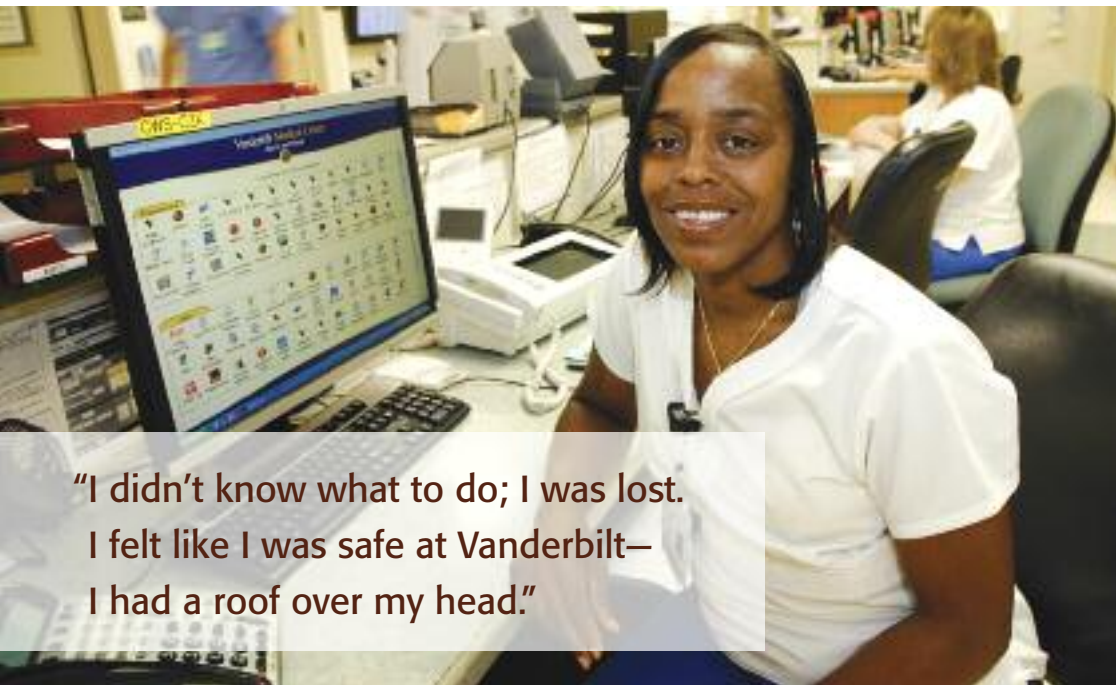


JOE HOWELL

# REGINA BAILEY

## Emergency Department

BY PAUL GOVERN



**"I didn't know what to do; I was lost. I felt like I was safe at Vanderbilt—I had a roof over my head."**

In the dawn that Sunday, Regina Bailey fell to her knees and wept. Flood waters had risen above the windowsills of her single-story house on Cooper Lane in East Nashville, where she and her children had lived for 17 years. Inside the house, the water level would soon top out at three-and-a-half feet.

"I could see the lights flicker in the house," she said. "I knew everything I owned was gone."

Bailey watched from the road for a while, then she crossed the city to report for a 12-hour shift in the Emergency Department at Vanderbilt University Hospital, where she is a medical receptionist.

Bailey's house remained flooded for five days. Her colleagues persuaded her to take that Sunday off, but after that she insisted on working her regular schedule.

"I was homeless. Where was I going to go? They wanted me to take off—if I take off it's depressing. I didn't know what to do; I was lost. I felt like I was safe at Vanderbilt—I had a roof over my head."

The rain had begun on Friday evening, and during work that Saturday she kept an eye on the local news. Three or four times she telephoned her neighbor, LuAnn, who was keeping watch on the neighborhood. Houses on Bailey's side of the street are officially inside the Cumberland River flood zone. Around 6:30 p.m., toward the end of her shift, Bailey learned that Cooper Lane had been closed due to flooding. "That's when I really got scared," she said.

Bailey's 12-year-old daughter, Diamond, was on a class trip to Washington, D.C., and her son, Quentin, was away at college at Chattanooga State.

But that still left Denzel, Bailey's toy poodle.

When she got home Saturday evening, Bailey was unable to wade through the cold floodwaters surrounding her house. The water had reached

### Voices from the Flood



May 8: I had a very Nashville moment just now. Delivering simple sack lunches to neighbors in the Beautiful Valley section of Boone Trace. "We so appreciate it," the woman said

"Where can I send a thank-you note?"

Really? A thank-you note for a dry, slightly squashed turkey sandwich, a bag of Sun Chips and a freckled banana? When her belongings have been hauled to the dump, her house has been stripped to the frames and she's been up to her elbows all morning in Clorox?

I've read and heard a lot about how Nashvillians have jumped to volunteer to help those who have suffered losses in this disaster. Having been on the volunteering end, I can't tell you how impressed I have been with what an appreciative and thankful community we are. The manners and the hospitality are running both ways, let me tell you.

—Cynthia Floyd Manley

the foundation but wasn't yet up to the door. Bailey's brother came to retrieve Denzel, then she and Denzel spent the night at Bailey's sister's in East Nashville—Bailey considered staying the night in her house, "but I had to go to work the next day and I thought how am I going to get back out of there with my uniform and not get it wet," she said with laughter.

In these circumstances, "you have to talk," Bailey says. She has spoken with her pastor and with a psychological counselor at Vanderbilt's WorkLife Connections – Employee Assistance Program. She has been heartened by the solicitude and generosity of co-workers and neighbors. Volunteers helped with flood cleanup. The manager of the ED, Janice Sisco, took her clothes shopping, and co-workers have brought in clothes and other necessities for Bailey and her children.



COURTESY REGINA BAILEY



# ONE DEPARTMENT'S EXPERIENCE:

## Radiation Oncology VUMC's hardest hit area

BY DAGNY STUART

**A** Sunday morning TV news report about flood waters leaking into Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt sent the first surge of alarm through Charles Coffey, Ph.D. The chief clinical physicist in Radiotherapy at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center wondered about the safety of the Radiation Oncology center in the basement of the Preston Research Building. Cancer patients depend on the exquisite precision of the multimillion dollar machines in Radiation Oncology to help treat their cancer. Were those machines at risk?

Within two hours, a phone call from Vanderbilt's Emergency Command Cen-

ter answered that question—swirling flood waters were invading the Radiation Oncology center. Coffey immediately called Bob Taylor, one of VICC's linear accelerator engineers, and the two drove through Nashville's flooded landscape to the Cancer Center. Racing down a darkened stairwell (by now only emergency power was available) they found water already nearing the bottom step.

“We knew it was bad. It was a matter of how bad it would be,” said Coffey. Splashing into flood waters now more than ankle-deep, the pair waded toward the most critical area, the linear accelerator rooms.

All of the electronic cables between the control rooms and the linear accelerators lie in protective concrete troughs under the floors, troughs now filled

with dark water. The cables and connectors were ruined.

But crucial components on the linear accelerators were mostly above the water line. Computers in the console area were up on racks, still an inch or so above the rising flood water.

“We started going room to room, pulling computer cables, unplugging equipment,” explained Coffey. “All of the power cords were on the floor under water. There were personal computers at floor level, many ruined.”

Coffey and Taylor were still handling electrical cords when, without warning, the power came back on. Fortunately,

**All of the electronic cables between the control rooms and the linear accelerators lie in protective concrete troughs under the floors, troughs now filled with dark water.**

they didn't receive an electrical shock—another disaster averted.

In between telephone consultations with Radiation Oncology Interim Chairman Arnold Malcolm, M.D., stranded behind flood waters at his home, Coffey and Taylor managed to reach Adrian Newson, director of Radiation Oncology Programs. Within a couple of hours Newson and more than a half dozen other staff members, and spouses, arrived to help.

“We were trying to save patient records, along with the masks, blocks and other equipment used to immobilize patients during radiation treatment,” said Newson. “Those masks are custom designed for each patient and without them patients might have to interrupt their treatment until new accessories could be manufactured.”

By 2 p.m. the water started receding, but “the damage was done,” explained Coffey. Now it was a salvage operation.

And the clock was already ticking on another issue—maintaining patient treatment schedules. Cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy often need to receive treatment on a rigorous



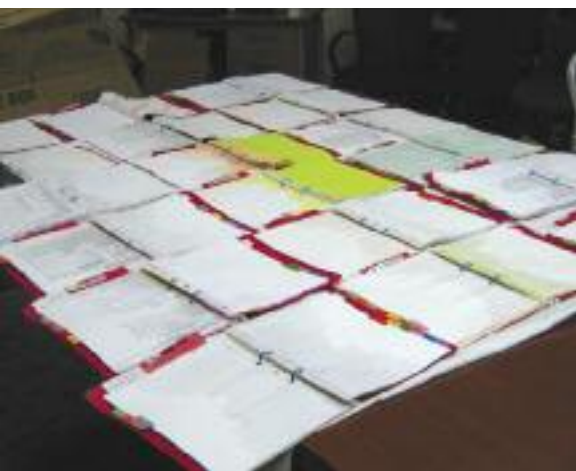
Fans were deployed all over the flooded basement areas to help quick drying.

schedule for optimal results. This was Sunday. Monday morning some of those patients would likely try to brave flooded streets to come in for treatment.

“Our primary focus is patient care and we needed to reach out to those patients,” said Newson. “We realized the treatment machines actually contain information about which patients are undergoing treatment, along with records, including phone numbers. We started calling patients and reached nearly all of them to tell them not to come in.”

Within 48 hours, Newson and Karen Munyon, clinic manager for VICC's other radiation oncology centers—VICC at Franklin and Gateway, in Clarksville—managed to redirect patients to those two facilities. They arranged shuttle service for patients needing transportation to Clarksville. Staff members also agreed to work extended hours at the satellite centers, treating patients from 6 a.m. until nearly midnight, to maintain treatment schedules.

Charles Coffey just shakes his head when remembering the Great Nashville Flood. “Never have I personally experienced something this damaging.”



Records were quickly spread out for drying to minimize damage.

# PAT SLATTERY

## Vanderbilt News Service



BY CAROLE BARTOO

In their years of working together, it was always Pat who worried about the pictures.

For nearly 20 years, Barb Cramer and Pat Slattery have worked together producing television stories. At WSMV-TV, Cramer was a reporter and worked with Slattery on special projects. Today Cramer and Slattery are colleagues working in video production at Vanderbilt, in much the same capacities.

**"It was amazing. Once [the pictures] really got soaked, they peeled apart nicely. Then they could be laid out to dry."**

But on May 5, it was Cramer who took charge of the Slattery family's photos, saving them from disaster.

When Cramer heard the Slattery family home in Bellevue was flooded on May 2, she decided to do what she could to help. Pat, his wife Carmel, and their 15-year-old son, Danny, lost almost all of their belongings.

"I was overwhelmed that day and just figured there was no hope for anything," said Carmel, Pat's wife of 29 years.

Water rose four feet in the single-story home. The Slatterys say the next week was a blur of strangers and friends coming in and out of the home they had owned for 22 years, dragging out river-soaked couches, beds and belongings.



Cabinets of laminated wood were in pieces; the books they contained swelled and burst out of their shelves.

Then there were the photos.

The family's three photo albums were a total wreck, and hundreds of other loose photos had been waiting, semi-organized, to be put into albums "one of these days," Carmel says. They were kept in a plastic container.

"But the container was on the floor," she said with a wry laugh. "It filled right up."

In the back-breaking work of hauling what used to be their homey surroundings into the street on Beech Bend Drive, the Slatterys say they had become blind to what was of value, or what might be saved.

"At that moment it's all just stuff," Pat said. "You just can't think about what you should try to save, there's just too much."

Cramer had come to help clear out the house before moisture and mold destroyed the infrastructure, but then she spotted a small photo of newborn Danny in his mother's arms at the hospital.

"I saw that picture, and everything was headed for the heap and I thought 'No, we have to save those.'"

She stashed a bag full of photos in her van, headed home, and got on the Internet to research what could be done.

"They were all stuck together, most of them face-to-face. It was disheartening," she said. But the instructions she found were hopefully simple. Lay out photos that are not stuck together, freeze any batches that can't be worked on right away, soak the stuck-together ones in cool, clear water.

"It was amazing. Once they really got soaked, they peeled apart nicely. Then they could be laid out to dry," Cramer said. "I thought I'd be able to save a few, maybe a handful, but I was able to save most of them."

A couple of weeks after the water subsided, Cramer visited the Slattery family at the home of co-worker and friend Emily Pearce, where the family is temporarily living.

Cramer presented the couple with two full bins of photos, all dry and safe:



Pat Slattery and his son, Danny, look over some of the photographs salvaged and restored by his colleague Barb Cramer.

photos of the young Slattery couple; the birth of their only son; Pat's trip to Athens, Greece; the family cat that outweighed baby Danny on the day he came home from the hospital.

That evening, the Slatterys reminisced with their friend, spinning tales illustrated by the images that had been lost, then resurrected. Perhaps the most meaningful story Barb and Pat had ever worked on together, the story of the Slattery family life.

### Voices from the Flood



May 6: I live in Bellevue near River Plantation which was heavily flooded. Thankfully, I was not flooded. I have a rain gauge in my vegetable garden which I started monitoring on Saturday. I measured at least 20 inches of rain in a 48 hour period. At one point on Sunday, I was no longer able to get to the rain gauge to empty it, so there was a period of time when the rain overflowed the gauge, and therefore not included in the 20 inches that I measured.

—Sherry Thompson