

# LIFE IN THE CITY: THE REFUGEES FUME, AND KIDS GO TO WORK

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Written By Penny Chang

Amid lines equal to a busy Saturday afternoon, Albertsons lobby manager Doug Ford was sticking price tags on 50 cases of batteries. The store ran out of batteries during Elena, he said, but he was going to make sure that didn't happen again.

People were calm but not too happy at the American Red Cross shelter located at the First Baptist Church, where families evacuated from Apalachicola and other nearby communities were waiting out Hurricane Kate.

Raymond Belt, who has been unemployed since Hurricane Elena, said he and his family weren't going to go back to Port St Joe.

They're headed for Texas, where he and his father will start oystering.

"Tell (Governor Bob) Graham to send some more money," said an Apalachicola resident who asked not to be identified. "Tell 'em everybody needs help."

Whole families lay on mats on the floor of the church's gym – from grandchildren to a great-grandmother, in the case of Ida Hall's family.

"If it wasn't for my mother, I think I wouldn't have left," said Hall, an Apalachicola resident.

She said her mother has heart trouble.

Church volunteers who provided mats and blankets and served chili and coffee for lunch reported little sleep in the previous 24 hours.

The employee of Creative Pre-school had six kids, including evacuees from Carabelle and Panacea, crowded into her small apartment.

Her husband had gone off to Dog Island to look after the Pelican Inn, but, she said, "I really haven't had time to worry with all the kids here. And when barometric pressure changes, kids go wild."

Staying home in a storm with a bunch of kids, she said, is just as brave as venturing out to an island. "They're all having a ball out in the hurricane. Meanwhile, we wives are home trying to keep kids calm and happy."

A Florida State University music graduate student, who identified himself only as Paul, was at Albertsons on North Monroe Street, buying chips and six-packs of beer.

“Forget it,” he said. He was getting ready to party “and work tomorrow, of course, like a diligent student.”

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The store still was planning to be open 24 hours, he said.

Tallahassee motels were full, as residents and vacationers fled the coast.

The Holiday Inn University Center had a television set up in the lobby with coffee for anyone who wanted to tune into the latest news, said desk attendant Bill Taylor.

“People seem to be in good spirits,” he said, but “they're tired and they're ready to go home.