

OFFER AID (KATE HAS HURT YOUR NEIGHBORS)

Tallahassee Democrat – November 26 1985

Give thanks on Thursday, by all means. But give help, too. A series of natural disasters has upset the lives of many people. Some of your neighbors in North Florida are in trouble this year.

Those living along the coast southwest of Tallahassee have been touched by hurricanes four times since Labor Day weekend. Elena stopped twice, wrecking Franklin County's all-important oyster crop. Juan forced a third evacuation and dumped a foot of water. Then Kate hit hard, virtually destroying the fishing, retail and tourist industries in what was already one of the state's poorest areas.

Now, many people from Panacea to Port St Joe and beyond are without homes, livelihood, food, clothing, blankets and medical care. Many had no insurance. Many now have only the clothes on their backs.

"I chose this way of life, and I'm going to make a comeback," said one seafood shipper. Such determination will revive Franklin County. But meanwhile, help is needed – urgently.

In Tallahassee, people are suffering, too. This city is not prepared for hurricanes, normally the bane of coastal existence. Here, trees crashed through roofs and power lines, leveling at least 21 homes and damaging more than 900 others.

For some, the storm was merely an inconvenience. For others, it is causing real hardship. A few Tallahasseeans are homeless; others have lost wages and what little food they had.

As the holidays approach, a time for luxury gift-giving becomes a time for emergency giving. If you can, do without something. Make a family pact to scale down purchases and offer whatever you can spare to those who really need it.

The lead agency in helping people in the hurricane aftermath is the American Red Cross. The local office is staffed with relief workers from all over the country who know how to target the needy and serve them.

American Red Cross officials, coordinating with government agencies and churches, are feeding 3,000 people each day along the coast. From you, they need money, food, clothing and blankets.

The cleanup will be a long process. Do whatever you can to assist.