

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No. 338

March 18, 2016

Sunflower River Flood

Clarksdale Flooded -- Including Quapaw
Canoe Company



Our beloved Cave as the water was rising... it eventually crested at chest height -- 4 feet deep!

Dear Friends, Family and Fellow River Rats: we know from experience that when you camp long enough on the banks of the river, you're gonna get wet. Well, it happened. The Quapaw Canoe Company headquarters "The Cave" has been flooded and we had to effect an evacuation.



We survived thanks to friends like Justin Riney

Last week (March 8-10, 2016) a saturated and very slow moving storm system stalled over the Lower Mississippi Valley and dumped 17" on Clarksdale and Coahoma County. The deluge pooled over all the fields, forests and flat farmland all around us and then accumulated into the Sunflower Basin, and caused the normally pacific Sunflower River to rise way over its banks and flood into our headquarters and office, a part of our building we affectionately call "the cave." This was the highest water level ever on the Sunflower River. We are not alone. Around 300 homes and businesses in Clarksdale suffered the same fate.



Our Escape Route

Our rescue route: It was a tense situation for us -- the fast rising waters early Thursday morning (March 9th) caught us flat-footed. Our upstream gage has stopped working, but just downstream of us the Sunflower rose about 25 feet in 24 hours, to highest ever levels. We had to cut a hole in the ceiling to get out. Thanks to Lena and 15 Pennsylvania HS students with Habitat for Humanity for coming to our rescue!



Everyone lent a Hand in this Cleanup

The Recovery: Fortunately we are all fine, no one has been hurt, and no lives were lost. But we are faced with a very expensive recovery. At Quapaw Canoe Company we will have to rebuild our central office, library, kitchen, outfitting, storage, meeting room, and bathroom. We lost our fridge, freezer, oven, all of our desks and work tables, our sofas, etc, etc.



The Cave... No More

Cleanup: The good news: the river crested on March 17th and is now dropping. It has fallen maybe one foot as of this morning. The bad news: now begins the awful messy stinky cleanup. Toxic mold has already taken hold inside the cave. The cleanup will require a complete gutting of the cave. After removing all walls, wood items, and everything that can be moved, we will have to plow and then power wash all of the mud out of the cave. Then we will have to very carefully sanitize the floors, walls and ceiling in an effort to remove all pathogens, fungal growth, and anything else of possible harm to future use.



MSU ALternative Spring Break Volunteers in the Flood

Rebuilding: And then begins the reconstruction of the cave. We will have to rebuild kitchen, meeting room, bathroom, central office, library, outfitting, and storage. A lot of people are wondering how they can help. Well, here's how! You can help us by supporting the reconstruction of our community.



A Flooded Clarksdale Neighborhood

How can you help? Over 300 homes and businesses in Clarksdale suffered this flood. Go to the [Red Cross](#) or the [Clarksdale Flood Relief Hub](#) Web Site for volunteering and donations. If you want you can support our recovery at [Quapaw Canoe Company Flood Recovery](#). We have been posting photos and information on our [Facebook Page](#). Thanks to everyone for your many thoughts & prayers!



MSU ALternative Spring Break Volunteers in the Flood

How else can you help? Please know we are still fully functional for guiding and outfitting. We saved all of our canoes, paddles, pfds (life jackets), drybags, dutch ovens, tents, sleeping bags, and all the necessary camping and canoeing equipment. Another way you can help support our survival is by booking a trip with us!



GRIOT ARTS paddling the March 2016 Flood

Please Note: We will have a "WE SURVIVED THE SUNFLOWER RIVER FLOOD" Party tonight (Friday Mar 18th) 6-7pm on the Kremser Plaza Porch next to our building at 3rd & Sunflower with music and slide show. Rain date: inside storefront at 289 Sunflower Avenue. The water is very slowly dropping, so you will be able to witness the flood firsthand, if you haven't already. Take a canoe, kayak or paddleboard and go explore. We will be giving guided tours of the hole we cut in the ceiling to make our escape. Go to our [Facebook Event Page](#) for more details.



MSU ALternative Spring Break Volunteers in the Flood

Thanks to everyone for your phone calls, emails, and messages of consolation and hope! Over 300 Clarksdale homes and businesses have water in them. We will survive this thanks to our strong community and the good spirit of all of our friends, family and relations all around us! Our paddles up to all of you from all of the Mighty Quapaws!



GRIOT ARTS paddling the March 2016 Flood

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

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The Lower Mississippi River Foundation

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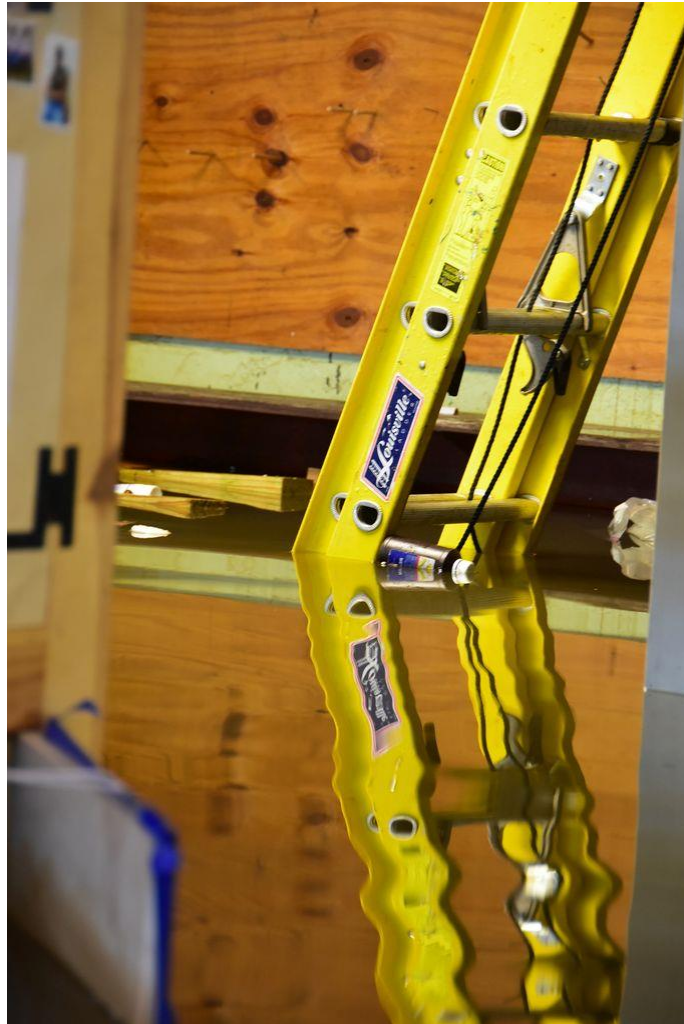
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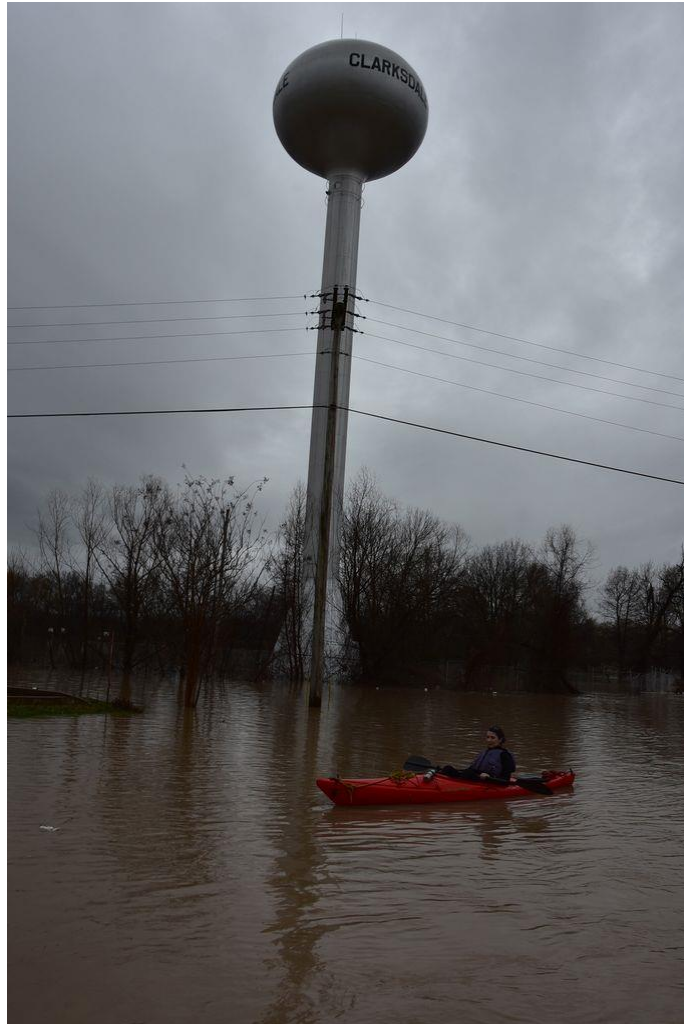
Our Temporary Boat Ramp



City Hall



Ladder to Safety



God Help Save Flooded Clarksdale!