A rain from Hurricane Ida pounded on the windows, Claire Huff (’26) and her roommates grabbed all the brooms they could find to sweep water out of their Tulane University dorm room.

New Orleanians who attempted to evacuate discovered gas shortages and sold-out flights. Huff and fellow Tulane student Sophie Lazear (’19) decided to stay put. Tulane Housing originally assured Lazear that generators would supply power during outages. As she learned hours later, they did not.

“We were hearing a lot about a big storm that was coming to hit us,” Huff said, “but we didn’t truly know how bad it would be.”

Exactly 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana, causing over $145 billion in damages, Ida struck New Orleans. The effects were felt from the coasts of Cuba to the subways of New York.

In the days before the storm, Huff noticed that students who had not lived on the Gulf Coast were unaware of the potential severity of hurricanes.

“I had a lot of people come up to me and say, ‘oh, you know, it’s just rain. It’s going to be okay,’” Huff said. “But there was a time when we thought [Hurricane] Harvey was just going to be rain, and then, obviously, it wasn’t.”

Stuck to their living arrangements, Huff and her roommates watched the new movies “It’s All That” and “Kissing Booth 3.”

“We just needed to watch something kind of silly and dumb, so we weren’t bogged down with more stress,” Huff said.

In the same building, Lazear discovered five leaks in her room. With her roommates out of town, Lazear scrambled to move their belongings out of the way and place towels where needed.

“It was really stressful because it was spreading a lot faster than I was expecting,” Lazear said. “I was trying to figure out where the leaking was coming from on the floor. The wall is a concrete block, so I thought, It can’t come from a wall. But it did.”

Still haunted by the memory of Katrina, many New Orleanians evacuating Ida were fearful that the city’s new levee system protected those who stayed. According to senior Jon Collins Deal, who has family in New Orleans, these two factors were vital in preventing Ida from becoming “Katrina 2.0.”

Former Review editor Irene Vázquez discovers flooded streets in her Hoboken, New Jersey, neighborhood. Hurricane Ida struck Louisiana on Aug. 29 as a Category 4 storm; two days later, the remnants soaked the northeast, causing billions in damage.

PHOTO | Irene Vázquez

“In at least, at least, I might have, I thought I was going to go,” Claire Huff (’26) said.

“We were hearing a lot about a big storm that was coming to hit us.”

CLARE HUFF (’26)

“I think it’s a unique, strange part of the country, and you grow attached to it. It’s not somewhere that can be written off.”

While LaBorde agrees that New Orleanians are resilient, she also says that their resilience stems from an old but persistent culture of denial that makes it hard for them to accept climate change.

“New Orleanians have perfected this art of living,” LaBorde said. “Sometimes I admire that, and sometimes I shake my head and think ‘your levee should be twice as tall.’”

Hurricane Ida

By The Numbers

82 DEATHS
172 MPH WINDS
$96B IN DAMAGES

“It's a strange, unique part of the country, and you grow attached to it. It's not somewhere that can be written off.”

PHOTO | Irene Vázquez

16 years after Katrina, Hurricane Ida wreaks havoc, displaces alums from New Orleans to N.J.

By Ella Chen & Wilson Bailey

“We think it’s a unique, strange part of the country, and you grow attached to it. It’s not somewhere that can be written off.”

PHOTO | Irene Vázquez

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