

Check Out
Coke County
Library

Coke County Library winners of a treat from Rhonda and Judy's this week are Maci Lee and Michael Munoz. All students who have brought back their books and entered their names into the drawing are eligible for an end-of-summer reading program drawing for a Supreme Pizza from the Pizza Barn.

The final drawing will take place Friday, July 29, at 11:30 am. It's not too late to get the library books back and enter names for the drawing. All names entered this summer will be included in this drawing. Two names will be drawn for the pizza prize. For each book returned, students can put their names in the drawing. Return four books, enter four times.

All students are encouraged to read during the summer to keep the brain cells strong. It's not too late to get in a reading workout - not quite like two-a-days, but for the same reason. Strong muscles make good football players and strong brain cells make good students.

A donation of really good magazines has been received. The magazines are ready for patrons to take home to read. A stack of magazines for browsing makes a good alternative to TV and Internet repetitions.

... Joplin Tornado
(Continued from page 5)
age them for the benefit of his Kingdom.

After we checked into the motel (one of the two remaining rooms), I started visiting with those employees in the motel that had lost all material things (homes, clothes,

automobiles, etc). They had escaped the potential death that did impact many families that night.

Tara Brady, the afternoon desk clerk, volunteered her actual story of the tornado. Tara along with her husband and two girls, ages 3 and 2, were home. They lived in the East area of Joplin where the storm first hit. They took shelter under a stairway of their two-story home when the siren sounded. Their home literally fell around them as the tornado passed over. When it passed, he looked out an opening to the north, and they escaped as the rest of their home went up in flames from the explosion of the natural gas set off by the pilot light of their furnace. They were not physically harmed; but emotionally, it was another story. Everything that did not blow away, burned to ashes. They only escaped with the clothes on their back. It was about 4 weeks before the girls started recovering emotionally by talking again in normal voices without crying, trembling, etc.

Walter, the maintenance manager of the motel, lived in the same area where the tornado initially touched the ground. He and his family were away for the evening. His father, who lives two blocks to the north and escaped the devastation, observed Walter's home when the tornado hit. He described the sequence as follows: "the entire home went straight up into the air like a rocket and disappeared". They never

found any piece of the home or any of the contents. When the weather experts analyzed the data from the F5, they estimated that some of the debris of the storm was blown to levels of 45,000 feet in the air and traveled in toward Springfield, Missouri. Walter's statement to me was: "it is great to be alive". They lost everything but their car.

The next morning, we drove three blocks into the "dead zone" where wood, debris, etc. had been removed. Nothing was left except some tree stumps and slabs of concrete. In black and white imagery, it resembled the remains of Hiroshima after the atomic bomb dropped during WW II.

The Church building at 26th & Connecticut was partially destroyed. About 80% of the roof was blown off and everything inside was damaged or destroyed; the large library was totally destroyed. Seven member families lost everything in the tornado and six regular non-member families lost everything. Several more homes were damaged from slight to severe. The attendance at 26th and Connecticut averages about 130 people on Sunday morning. If you could imagine 25% of your members losing everything in the span of 30 minutes, how would the work of your Church proceed?

In preparation for the special fund raising at Oldham Lane, Royce Scott had started preparing a Power Point presentation to show the members in advance. With the assistance of Richard White (Elder), Richard Chambers (Minister)

and Dale Hoggatt (Deacon), Sara Coalson (granddaughter) and I were able to take over 100 digital photos; many of them to be used on the Power Point Presentation. Richard White told me the generous response of the brotherhood had been so much greater then expected and asked everyone to pray for them that they might have the wisdom to deal properly with this unexpected strategy.

It is difficult to visualize the damage by viewing photos or TV shots on the news shows. As stated earlier, the path was one mile wide and seven miles long. The tornado went through the heaviest populated part of Joplin (most people per square block). Joplin's population was about 48,000 and overnight it was reduced by about one third. As a result of the tornado, some 1200 families are staying in short term motels and many of the others have moved to live with family members in Joplin or other cities. FEMA is now in the process of setting up 350 temporary homes near the Joplin Airport to relieve some of the pressure on the apartments that are available.

At the time of our visit to the Church, the repair to the roof had been completed and they were working to start other repairs, pews, carpet, etc. Sunday, July 10, was the first day they met back in the building and the carpet was installed prior to services on July 17. Dale provided an update based upon official

news releases from Joplin officials: 159 dead (including Church of Christ deacon and wife); 20,000 vehicles totally destroyed; 4,000 homes totally destroyed or condemned and 2,000 businesses partially or completely totally destroyed. A total of five schools were partially or totally destroyed; one of the middle schools totally destroyed had only been in use for one year. As a result of the tornado, 62% of the school age children in Joplin are homeless. However, school will start on August 17 in converted buildings of all types to try to get the community feeling back together again.

The Joplin High School was relatively new and it was completely destroyed, along with the music department, band instruments, etc. On the Saturday after our second visit, Branson, Missouri, was sponsoring a telethon to raise money to replace all the band instruments so the band could be ready for the initial football game, other functions, etc.

A large sign in front of the school contained the name of the school in large letters, but the only letters remaining on the sign were"-op-". Someone had taken duct tape and attached large letters so that the sign now reads "HOPE". It is the thinking of the citizens of Joplin that the new rebuilt high school will be named "Hope".

To be continued in next week's Observer/Enterprise.


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