



ANIMAL KING: ANIMAL KINGDOM SURGES DOWN STRETCH TO WIN KENTUCKY DERBY SPORTS/C1

WINNING EYE
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LIFE/D2

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Log on to view a photo gallery of CJ's Bus volunteers helping out in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

ANALYSIS Daniels lacks policy edge

But weakness may not be fatal

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INDIANAPOLIS — Probably not.

That's the answer Mitch Daniels, who is deciding on a run for the White House, gave to a question last week about whether he could compete right now with President Barack Obama in a debate over foreign policy.



Gov. Mitch Daniels

There is plenty of time for the two-term Republican governor of Indiana to get up to speed, especially since no one in the primary field he might enter has much more experience in that realm.

What is clear, though, is that Daniels will be making his decision during a period in which the Democratic president's approval ratings have ticked upward after United States commandos killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

The more a prospective

DANIELS / Page A15

Projects carry risk for mayors

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It was 1999, and Russ Lloyd Jr. could not believe the numbers staring him in the face.

About half of the respondents to a poll conducted for Lloyd's campaign for Evansville mayor were against his plan to reopen the Downtown Main Street Walkway to vehicles.

Lloyd expected about 75 percent to be for it.

"I thought, 'My gosh, you know, the Downtown's dying on the vine.' All these boarded up storefronts on Main Street. You would think people would be well-

ELECTION / Page A10

BRINGING COMFORT AMID DESTRUCTION



KYLE GRANTHAM / Courier & Press

Rolling aid center heads South to assist ravaged community



SEE FULL STORY AND EXPANDED PHOTO COVERAGE IN TODAY'S FOUR-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION

After a killer tornado swept through Tuscaloosa, Ala., last month, Evansville's CJ's Bus headed south to help the victims of that community. As seen above, an American flag recovered from the rubble of a Lucky Dollar convenience store and gas station shows the spirit of the wounded community.

The photo shows First Street East, which is now lined with cars, tents and people. It was once a heavily wooded area, but no trees remain after the tornadoes ripped through Tuscaloosa on April 27. The devastation extends for miles.

At left, Kathryn Martin, executive director and founder of CJ's Bus, is shown playing with Jadeona Davis, 4, in the bus on May 1. The bus and volunteers from the nonprofit organization went to Tuscaloosa to provide a safe place for area children to recover from tornadoes that destroyed parts of several communities.

Martin's 2-year-old son CJ died in a tornado that ravaged the Evansville area in November 2005. Afterward, Martin earned a degree in human services and founded CJ's Bus in honor of her son.

Ohio River floodwater didn't sink Mother's Day plans

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Posey County mother Nancy Hasting and her family don't normally celebrate Mother's Day weekend with much bravado, though she is always around flowers this time of year.

Hasting started Hasting

Florist still attended son's graduation

Plants long before her two children — Dan, 23, and Diane, 18 — were born. Mother's Day traditionally has been just another workday for Hasting, 56.

"I go to church and come home and am at the greenhouse," said Hasting, who noted she follows the same routine when Easter lands in



late April.

"You don't have a holiday

when you have to work."

But she had planned to take time off for one special occasion this weekend — before flooding in Point Township forced her to temporarily close the shop two weeks ago.

But the honoree isn't Mom. Like many moms being honored today for their acts

HASTING / Page A9

INSIDE

Allison Mooney reflects on the joys of motherhood and parenting a 3-year-old. See her column on Page D1.



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CJ's Bus volunteers are reflected in the windows of the vehicle as they begin setting up a play area for children and unloading supplies on May 1 at Bowers Park in Tuscaloosa, Ala.



Kathryn Martin plays with Jay'Mikia Bates, 3, at CJ's Bus on Monday. Jay'Mikia and her three siblings lost everything when their home in Alberta City in Tuscaloosa, Ala., was destroyed by an F4 tornado on April 27. They now live in a Red Cross shelter at the Belk Activities Center at Bowers Park in Tuscaloosa with hundreds of other tornado victims.

BRINGING COMFORT AMID DESTRUCTION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KYLE GRANTHAM ■ STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST ■ (812) 464-7683 ■ GRANTHAMK@COURIERPRESS.COM

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Leicia Fairchild was leaning against a fence at a park with her 9-week-old baby on Monday when a group of volunteers from Evansville's CJ's Bus offered her a seat under the shade of their tent.

Fairchild lost everything in the April 27 F4 tornado that destroyed her home here, taking with it hundreds of lives.

Red streaks, signs of a possible infection, showed on her leg after she stepped on nine nails climbing out of the rubble of her home. She had no shoes and had to bathe her baby in a bathroom sink at the nearby Red Cross shelter.

Within minutes of meeting her, volunteers from CJ's Bus found clothing for Fairchild's baby. A woman from a local church gave Fairchild the shoes off her feet. Other volunteers went to Walmart to buy a baby bath. Alyson Jackson, a volunteer from Gulf Shores, took Fairchild for a tetanus shot she desperately needed.

The volunteers set out from Evansville on April 30, three days after the deadly toradoes swept through Alabama and much of the South, killing at least 329 people and destroying communities across seven states.

Disaster recovery is the mission of CJ's Bus, a not-for-profit organization founded by Kathryn Martin, whose 2-year-old son, CJ, was among 25 people killed when a tornado swept



Latia Cobbs prays to Jesus Christ, thanking him for keeping her and her four sons safe during the devastating tornadoes on April 27, as clouds break to reveal the sunset over Alberta City, a community of Tuscaloosa, Ala. An F4 tornado destroyed Cobbs' home and everything she owned. One of the first things she and her neighbor Susie Palmer did upon

returning to recover salvageable belongings was construct a cross from the remains of Cobbs' home. A piece of wood next to the remnants of Cobbs' car in the background reads John 3:16, a reference to the Bible verse, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, and that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

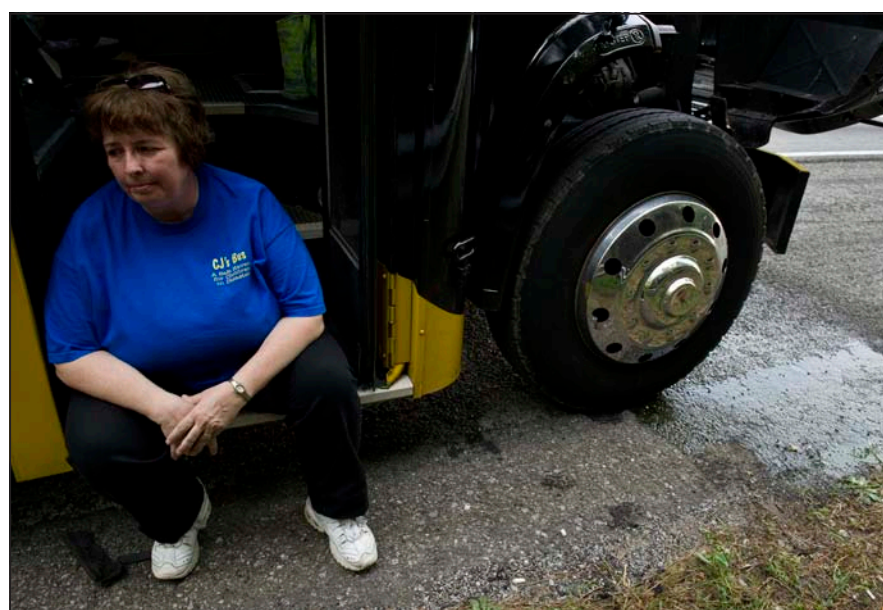
Continued on Page 3



CJ's Bus cruises along Interstate 65 in Tennessee on its way to Tuscaloosa, Ala., on April 30 in an effort to provide relief to the children of the tornado-ravaged area.



Matt Noble refuels CJ's Bus while John Martin and Lissa Rust talk in the background. The bus stopped about every 70 miles for fuel. The weight of the modified school bus and steep grades of the highways led Noble to guess the fuel mileage at "about three miles per gallon." Bob Rothschild of Evansville Garage Doors sought out the group the day before it left and offered to sponsor the cost of fuel.



Donna Feagley sits on the steps of CJ's Bus as she waits with other volunteers for a new radiator to arrive along Interstate 65 near Warrior, Ala., on April 30. The volunteers were just a few hours away from reaching their destination when the bus struck a piece of storm debris in the roadway and were forced to stop for repairs. The group was stalled for several hours.



Matt Noble, far right, and John Martin look under the hood of CJ's Bus as they assess the damage to the bus' radiator after it struck a piece of storm debris along Interstate 65 about a half mile from Warrior, Ala., just more than 70 miles from their destination.

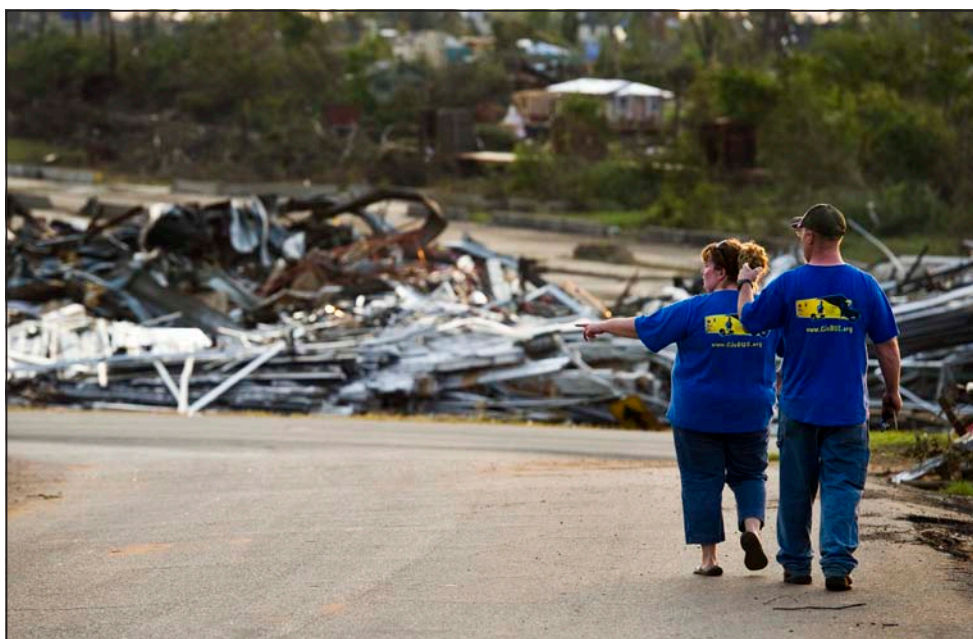


After 24 straight hours on the road with no sleep and little to eat, John Martin guides CJ's Bus into a grassy field at Bowers Park in Tuscaloosa, Ala. The group was determined to meet the commitment they made to the community and local Red Cross shelter to be there on May 1 ready for children.

Kathryn Martin blows a kiss as she waves goodbye to tow-truck driver Richard Darnell of Cullman Towing in Cullman, Ala. Darnell made the tow run just after 4 a.m. on May 1 in order to help the bus reach its destination in time to host children early in the morning. No other towing company would make the tow before 10 a.m.



Matt Noble begins setting up CJ's Bus shortly after arriving at Bowers Park in Tuscaloosa, Ala., as he pulls apart the walls of the passenger side of the bus.



CJ's Bus volunteers Matt and Jenn Noble walk down 10th Street East toward Kicker Road East in Alberta City, a community of Tuscaloosa, Ala. The mangled and twisted piles of steel are the remnants of a warehouse that sat near the intersection before an F4 tornado ripped through the city on April 27.



Tara Greenlee manages a large group of kids as they color and play games inside CJ's Bus. More than 60 children came to the bus May 1 and taxed the group of 10 volunteers who were running on no sleep after the bus sustained radiator damage the night before.

Continued from Page 1

across Evansville and the surrounding Tri-State in 2005.

The aim of CJ's Bus is to provide a safe place for children and a temporary distraction from the constant reminders of what they've lost.

Volunteers brought the bus to Tuscaloosa to help people like Monique Chandler and three her children, Jay'Mon, Jay'Quan and Jay'Mikia Bates, who visited CJ's Bus every day.

There's nothing left of the place they used to call home.

"Baby, it's gone, it's all gone, there is nothing, it's all gone. The apartment we stayed in is gone," said Sonjanice James, Chandler's roommate, who brought the children to the bus daily. "We were in there when the tornado happened and we couldn't do nothing but get

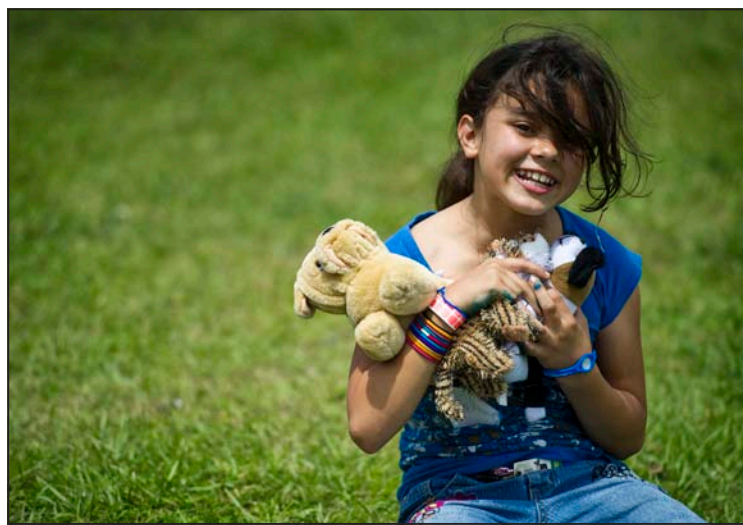
in the tub. It took off the roof, it took the whole front of the building."

That's a memory Martin aims to replace for children with new ones created by CJ's Bus.

"It's great ... when there's all these problems going on, that we can drop the kids off and not take them back to see what happened," James said. "Most people don't think that kids think about stuff like that, but they do. They wouldn't come outside for two days."

James said the bus inspired the children to come out of the shelter. In a short time, the bus became part of the community.

"When we leave, it's going to be a sad day," Martin said while on the bus Tuesday afternoon while the Bates children played with volunteers. "We have kids that their aunt said they cried all morning wanting



Sadie Perez, 10, plays with stuffed animals outside of CJ's Bus.

to come and she couldn't get here. I can imagine on the day that we leave it's going to be like any other deployment where the kids are really upset

when we go. I think we are a part of the community just like the community is a part of us."

The volunteers from CJ's Bus

returned to Evansville briefly last week to regroup and resupply. When they returned to Alabama on Friday evening, they moved the bus to the Crescent Ridge Housing Project near Alberta City, where they plan to stay as long as they're needed.

"I went out there and saw where these children are living, and parents have told us there are still families that are out there and they refuse to leave because of the looting," Martin said. "We need to go to them."

The new location means the Bates children will miss the big yellow and black bus full of toys that kept them safe and entertained every day.

"They woke up this morning crying," Chandler said Thursday. "I had to explain to them the bus had to go visit other children."



Jay'Mikia Bates, 3, shows off her new hat to Donna Feagley on CJ's Bus on Tuesday. Heavy rains kept most kids in the Red Cross shelter at the Belk Activities Center at Bowers Park, but the Bates children missed the bus too much to be kept away. While volunteers planned to use the day to determine a new location for the bus, when the children showed up, they opened the doors and found activities for them.



Jay'Mon Bates, 5, paints Alyson Jackson's face on Tuesday on CJ's Bus. Jackson, a resident of Gulf Shores, Ala., was in Tuscaloosa as a volunteer and quickly became part of the CJ's Bus family. Jackson found the group of volunteers a place to stay on the campus of the University of Alabama and volunteered at the bus each day.



Jay'Quan Bates, 4, takes a nap on the floor of CJ's Bus on a yellow dinosaur stuffed animal that was donated to the bus. Bates and his three siblings find it hard to get any rest in the crowded Red Cross shelter they now live in, but all three got some needed sleep CJ's Bus on Tuesday.



Jay'Quan Bates, 4, holds tightly to the shoulder of Tony Goben as he is walked to his aunt's car to return to the shelter where his family now lives. Their home in Alberta City, a community of Tuscaloosa, Ala., was destroyed by an F4 tornado on April 27, and the family lost everything.



Jay'Mikia Bates, 3, cries as she prepares to return to the Red Cross shelter her family now calls home after spending the day at CJ's Bus on Tuesday. "They wake up every morning crying because they want to come to the bus," Sonjanice James, the children's aunt, said.



RIGHT: Monique Chandler sits with her four children after her three oldest, Jay'Mikia, Jay'Mon and Jay'Quan Bates all returned from a day at CJ's Bus on Tuesday. The children play with toys they received from the bus in their small corner of the Belk Activities Center at Bowers Park in Tuscaloosa, Ala., where the Red Cross shelter they now call home is located.



Hundreds of cots fill one of two gymnasiums at the Belk Activities Center at Bowers Park. The recreation center is now home to more than 250 people who lost everything in the April 27 tornadoes that ravaged Tuscaloosa, Ala.

This is the room that many of the children at CJ's Bus return to every night when the bus closes its doors. Many residents complain it's impossible to get any rest and that there's little room for children to play at the shelter.