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LOCAL

# **Traumas can lead** to spiritual growth

**By JOSHUA NORMAN** jdnorman@sunherald.com

For decades, negative reactions to traumatic events have been the focus of countless articles, studies and stories, Hurricane Katrina being no exception. The negative focus on disasters and trauma is so prevalent that by now nearly everyone has probably heard the phrase "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder."

There is, however, a flip side to trauma that mental health professionals only recently have begun to take a closer look at. It is called Post-Traumatic Growth, which is a fancy way of spinning an old cliché; "That which does not kill you makes you stronger."

Richard Tedeschi, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, was one of the first in his field to ever use the phrase in a 1995 book he wrote with a colleague on the subject.

We coined the term Post-Traumatic Growth to sort of encompass all the different things we found in literature about this," Tedeschi said in a phone interview last week. The concept is really just ancient. If you look at writings in religion, in philosophy from centuries past you find these kind of concepts that suffering can lead to something positive. You can find this in biblical literature. Psychologists are late to the party.

There are five main areas of personal growth that people talk about after traumatic events, Tedeschi said. They are spiritual growth, improved sense of self, enhanced relationships, a general appreciation of the value of life and being set on a positive new life course or new life path.

Spiritual leaders have long used events like Katrina and the Iraq war to foster personal growth, and people like Eddie Moore of Pascagoula have 2

Eddie and Shirley Moore hold a photograph of their son, Willie, a Marine who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. On Jan. 21, the 23-year-old Iraq veteran took his own life before he could receive treatment. Despite the pain caused by their son's suicide, Eddie Moore is trying to use the traumatic experience to better himself and help others.

embraced that growth in spite of their pain.

On Jan. 21, the 23-year-old

reservist and armored person-

nel carrier driver took his own

life before he could receive

The pain Moore and his

wife, Shirley, have experi-

enced is profound, but Moore

Hurricane

treatment.

Moore's son, Willy James in spite of it. Moore, came back from Iraq Life's pain, even though it to Pascagoula following his seems destructive, is actually second tour with the Marine part of life," said Moore, add-Corps less than a month after ing that he is planning on set-Katrina. The ting up meetings at his church Moore family house had to help others suffering like flooded during the storm, and him. "One of my favorite (bib-Willy James Moore was struglical) books is the book of gling with getting treatment Job. for what seemed to be PTSD.

It is arguable that Post-Traumatic Growth is a central theme to the book of Job, and it is a tale that is highly regarded by Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

better himself and help others

KARI GOODNOUGH/SUN HERALD

Please see War, A-7



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#### **OFF THE FRONT/LOCAL/MISSISSIPPI**

## Vital statistics yield some interesting facts

By MEGHA SATYANARAYANA megha@sunherald.com

The State Department of Health released its vital statistics report for 2006 this week, which is a snapshot of Mississippi life, including birth, death, marriage and divorce. Here are a few headscratching statistics:

■ About 100 Mississippians have 10 or more children. Hopefully, their parents remember all their names.

■ Harrison and George counties are pretty darn fertile. Both have higher fertility rates, at 80 and 84 live births per 1,000 population, than the state average of 75 live births per 1,000 population.

■ Two folks in Mississippi got married in 2006 for the

10th time each. If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, try, try, try, try, try, try again.

■ No one under the age of 13 got married last year. However, five 14-year-olds did. It is unknown whether the receptions were dry, and who drove them to their honeymoon.

■ There were four divorces due to bigamy. However, it is unclear if the divorces were amongst folks married to the same person, or to other peo-

■ More than 6,000 women gained 45 or more pounds during pregnancy in 2006, and about 2,000 gained less than 10 pounds. Envy, however, is not a reportable statistic.

■ Two people were struck by lightning in 2006. They now have a certain glow.

#### Lott says lobbying is a new career possibility

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSON, — U.S. Sen. Lott, R-Miss., Trent resigned late Tuesday after 35 years in elected office -19 in the Senate and 16 in the House. Here are excerpts from Lott's interview Wednesday with The Associated Press in Jackson. He spoke by telephone

A

deal

ernment was out of control from his Washington office: spending too much money, **Q** Is lobbying one of the too many taxes and I really options for you? thought fiscal responsibility Yes, it is, although and a balanced budget is in you have to carefully everybody's best interest. comply with all of the rules. And last, not least, I was

I think the truth of the matworried about ... the future ter is, not a lot of senators security and solvency and do what you would call the strength of the Social Security traditional lobbying. They system and I wanted to see if do more in terms of stratwe could do something to egy or consulting on what's make sure it was going to be going on in the Congress or in the government and give advice about how to with that. I guess that's possible. **Q** Are you intercent becoming chancellor Are you interested in

of your alma mater, the University of Mississippi? Well, I hope (the job) A well, I nope (une job) won't be open anytime soon. Robert Khayat's one of my very best friends and he's just done a wonderful job at the university. Love him to death. I love Ole Miss. Everybody knows that. I suspect that may be why there's been some speculation along those lines. But I have no plans to do that. Mainly because I want Robert to

stay as long as he will. Q You've said one of your regrets is that Social Security still has problems.

When I came to A Washington as а member of Congress back in the early '70s, based on,

growth, said Jeff Bennett,

director of Gulf Coast Mental

Health Center, the sliding-

scale mental health treatment

provider serving all of Harri-

Bennett said spiritual

growth is one of many kinds

of growth that can be experi-

Scruggs

roller-coaster year. The Mis-

sissippi Department of Trans-

portation Southern District

commissioner celebrated the

reopening of the Bay St. Louis

and Biloxi Bay bridges and

was re-elected. He clashed

with Gulfport Mayor Brent

Warr over a proposed ele-

vated roadway through the

city and answered calls for a

red light at the intersection of

U.S. 49 and Mississippi 67 in

Saucier from families of vic-

tims who were injured or

son and Hancock counties.

had a job to do. I stayed with you know, my early years and what I had observed working

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And then over a period of as a staff member, there were time, I had some other diffisome things I really wanted to cult things — including work on. I felt like our military was losing ground, they weren't being modernized,

Hurricane Katrina, which hurt us all in south Mississippi, including my wife and me and all of our neighbors and our



### Two flee police after collision at intersection

By MICHAEL NEWSOM mmnewsom@sunherald.com

PASCAGOULA — Police arrested two men Saturday after they were allegedly involved in a car accident and then left the scene on foot.

The collision happened on Chicot Road near the intersection of Denny Avenue just before 7 p.m. A car with three passengers inside entered the intersection and was hit by a

The driver and passenger in

#### War

Continued from A-4

Moore said he has taken some of Job's lessons and applied them to his healing process, by helping others where he can and speaking out on the dangers of PTSD in war veterans and in the gen-

the van got out and ran away, but police said they caught them not long after. The driver of the van, Bran-

don Hart, had no license and police learned he was wanted on outstanding warrants. His passenger, Richard Hart, was charged with public drunkenness after he was caught. The two were taken to the

Pascagoula city jail. All three passengers in the car Hart allegedly struck were taken to the hospital with inju-

inextricably

ries. Their conditions were not known Saturday night. pain, the pain lessens." Taking a chance, however,

Pain and growth after a may be the only path to

without taking chances," Bennett said. "That's the nature of our existence."

rehabilitated your career?

make

Joshua Norman is a Media Fellow with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation studying post-Katrina mental health issues. In tomorrow's installment on Post-Traumatic

there, not just for my mother and us, but my children and my grandchildren. We have not done the latter part of that, and I regret that. There have been a couple runs at it. I didn't think it was done properly. But we're going to have to deal with it before too much longer, and I wish we'd done it on my watch. You can't do it all, but we did do the other two ... And we also, when I was majority leader, we had balanced budgets four out of my six and a half years, and surpluses two. **Q** Since the uproar over your praise of U.S. Sen.

something about that.

population at every eral opportunity.

'It's therapeutic to talk," Moore said. "It's almost like a vice if you keep stuff in. When people come and share your

**Newsmakers** 

S1

from

billion

Continued from A-1

Holloway

built in the city.

Additionally, Moore and his wife are taking a big chance by talking about their son, because so few families of suicide victims open up about post-Katrina. their experience.

are still."

trauma are

linked, said Tedeschi.

"This is not an either or

thing," Tedeschi said. "It's not

that people are either suffer-

ing or growing. Everyone who

has experienced this kind of

growth has suffered. Many

enced after a traumatic event. He said he has seen many of his patients and clients open up and improve themselves "You can't make progress

Densor

killed there.

Growth, Joshua will look more closely at the kinds of personal improvements people can experience after traumatic events. and how those improvements come about.



Billheimer

traditional guitar smash on June 30. Two months later he led the casino out of bankruptcy that resulted when the senior lender wouldn't allow the company to pay creditors after Hurricane Katrina.

10. Robin Roberts, who has kept the Mississippi Coast in the national spotlight as a co-anchor of ABC's "Good Morning America," became a spokeswoman for breast cancer awareness after announcing her own battle on the morning show in July. She spoke at a breast cancer fundraiser while on the Coast for the second anniversary of Katrina and has continued to bring awareness to both stories throughout her treatment.

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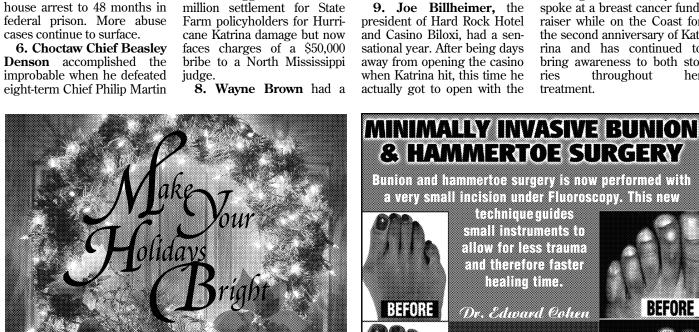
son County were sentenced for their part in the murder of Jessie Lee Williams Jr., an inmate at the jail. Teel was given two life terms plus 20 years while the others will serve between four months of cion. Scruggs won a \$25.6 house arrest to 48 months in



Teel

pushing a proposal to build a Choctaw casino in Jackson County. He made a favorable impression on some political and business leaders, but fell short of convincing the voters, who turned down the casino in a non-binding referendum. 7. Richard "Dickie" Scruggs went from the champion of insurance policy holders to an attorney under suspi-

million settlement for State judge.



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