The following is an experimental comic piece that personally used comic art to navigate the aftermath of enduring the August 2020 derecho: an inland hurricane that, in 14 hours, led to $11 billion in damage, caused 25 tornadoes from Nebraska to Ohio, and destroyed 70 percent of the tree canopy in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Find discussion questions and a follow up set of panels exploring this process and how engaging this form of storytelling is meaningful for processing disaster experience in the *Journal of Folklore and Education* Volume 9 (2022) [https://jfepublications.org/article/derecho-days](https://jfepublications.org/article/derecho-days)
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 1

On Monday morning—August 10, 2020—we knew there would be storms, but nothing prepared us for this.

My oldest and I had just made soup.

As we all had our heads bowed to bless our lunch, things began to blow, and we heard sirens.

Basement time.

Outside, trees were falling like dominoes.

Including one on my car.

There are so many downed trees and power lines.

I have never seen such a storm in my entire life, and neither have my neighbors.
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 2

At one point, one million people had no power due to the derecho, which at its worst had the power of an EF-2 tornado or a Category 3 hurricane.

Many people traveled far away just to refuel. Jen drove 45 minutes; most places that were open had 50+ cars in line or ran out entirely.

Some people elected to get out of town. Including us.

There is no date for when power will return.

Pharmacy systems are down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area hotels are full.</th>
<th>Over 20 schools were damaged.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO VACANCY</td>
<td>(Cedar River Academy lost its greenhouse.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still, people are hopeful. They know a thing or two about resilience.
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 3

The estimate for power returning is all over the place, with some saying 1-2 weeks and rumors of 3-4 going around.

There are no gas cans, chainsaws, or generators left.

We had to truck some ice from Cedar Falls.

We are part of a 20-county disaster area along US 30 + I-80.

The magnitude only gets bigger + bigger.
**DERECHO DAYS: DAY 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today, the mayor of Cedar Rapids said the Guard wasn’t needed.</th>
<th>People begged to differ.</th>
<th>So the county Board of Supervisors requested the Guard, and they are already prepping.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79% of Linn Co. - no power.</td>
<td>We finally got an estimate.</td>
<td>5 to 7 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had help to clear out all our spoiled food.</td>
<td>My first thought: So many raccoons.</td>
<td>It's a blip on national news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Rapids was famous for its flood.</td>
<td>But locals are saying that this is way worse than 2008.</td>
<td>People are working to feed those who are without.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flood didn't hit everyone.</td>
<td>This time, no one was really spared.</td>
<td>Derechos hit, and they hit hard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 5

We had to leave the area today.

It was out of medical necessity.

They say power will be back on Tuesday.

The trucks are only one street over.

My car was finally towed away.

The governor came today.

She toured Kennedy HS with our superintendent.

I hated leaving.

I want to be with my brothers and sisters.

But I also have to care for my children.

Sawing and clearing limbs.

There will be plenty to do when I return.
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 6

Gradually, the number of people is decreasing. \[\text{⚠️ It's down to just under 90,000.}\]

Electric bucket trucks are even coming from Ontario!

The Iowa Derecho Storm Resource Page has 39,000 members who are posting help, news + other info.

People outside city limits don't get city help, and need it. The storm is finally making the news. Six days later.
DERECHO DAYS: DAY 7, PT. 1

Some apartments have a lot of refugee residents whose homes are so full of storm damage that they've been sleeping in tents outside of their buildings.

Most of the vulnerable populations in the area still don't have power back.

- No or few resources to pay for a hotel.
- More prone to price gouging for tree removal and other services.
- Many can't just get in the car and go elsewhere.

While it's not intentional on the surface, the neediest of people in this time remain marginalized and fight for a voice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number is down to around 75,000</th>
<th>Many refugees have been given shelter at the Catherine McAuley Center.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White saviors are coming with supplies + bag lunches...</td>
<td>...and then not either having enough, or panicking when people swarm for help. (It's better to work with the community, not for.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More shelters are up coming.</td>
<td>More food is getting distributed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood resource centers have emerged.</td>
<td>More debris is going away from the roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>But so much still has to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 8

The number went both down and up, with something happening in some areas that caused people to lose power yet again. The count is down to around 54,000 this evening.

Supposedly, Trump will be in Iowa tomorrow.

A "Derecho Comic Relief" page was started to release some tension.

#ElDorito
(It is quite a laugh)

The Islamic Center is hosting halal food relief for the community.

Gradually, our neighbors are getting power. And the tree debris is vanishing.

S/LA
Derecho Days, Day 9

The number is down to 32,800 without a third of the power. Outages in one day. Finally, our power is back on.

The president flew into the area today...

...asked dumb questions...

So you really like those trees?

...and left that day, having never left the Eastern Iowa Airport.

The Iowa Utilities Board wants to get power back to everyone by the end of the week.

Conc. Fri.

Heroes like Willie Fairley are feeding the city, and feeding them well.

People are really tired, but still working nonetheless.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 10

We are finally home. Most of our part of town is still in the dark. 26,105 still without power.

They've now found out that some winds were at 140 miles per hour. Faster than Hurricane Harvey from 2017. The fastest in Iowa history.

CATEGORY 4.

There is a lot about collective trauma out there. Ten minutes to prep. A pandemic still present.

As an IPR article says,

#IowaStrong... but also #IowaTired.

No playbook this time around.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY II

In Linn County, over 15,000 still don't have power. Individual FEMA relief was approved today.

So many trees left to go.

People are still waiting for power.

People are mentally really struggling.

Even with support, people are wondering how to restock their fridges + find - in some cases - a new home.

But people are still trying to help one another, even when they themselves are worn out.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 12

The number is now under 10,000—mostly in Linn County. !

People in mobile home parks have been struggling to get the same services, but the word's gotten out.

Because of community efforts, the Central base at Public Health shifted to neighborhood resource centers.

In Bertram today, a team of NCCC members worked with Jewish Orthodox Christian relief workers to clear out elderly residents' tree damage.

(Turns out 10CC+Nechama work tightly together.) I was with them today.

Even if we're chucking out one log at a time, we are making headway. (And it's cathartic to chuck logs to a pile.)
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 13

The number is less than 5,000. It was halved today, and is in 3-4 counties.

You are starting to see some groups go.

But much work remains to be done.

People are helping restock kitchens.

There is so much less shade, and it already feels hotter without the canopy.

The Teamsters are doing a massive supply drive.

At my daughter's dance class today, talking to other parents felt like a story circle of damage reports, close calls, + what-nows.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 14

The number has wavered today ... but it is still under 5,000.

On the SW side of CR, people at two apartments complexes were given 2 days' notice to leave due to storm repair. (Cedar-Linn Co. managed to get people safe places to live.)

Many are non-English speakers, and are relying on assistance from others.

Matthew 25 + Hue + Advocates for Social Justice have teamed up to feed people at Redmond Park.

Very empathic people! Here is a pain that lingers—being unable to do more.

You are seeing many community helpers struggle HARD with it.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 15

449.

⚠️

Linemen are starting to head out more quickly.

99% of people have power.

Wi-Fi is an issue.

Many folks still don't have it at home.

A lot of folks are having trouble with their insurance adjusters + policies.

The resource centers are still busy, and the heat calls for cooling stations.

46,000 tons of debris have been collected, with just 20% of the roads having been collected so far.

I wonder when the best time to collect stories will be.

For some, it may be so hard to get the experience out there.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 16

For the first time, Wisconsin’s outages outnumbered Iowa’s.

Many of the linemen are now thinking about the Gulf storms that are present.

For those without power, it is a danger.

A lot of people have complained of State Farm - among others - shorting people filing insurance claims.

Two of them.

The temp has been 95°F.

Some of the major figures in the early recovery process are now back to their business as usual, helping others while balancing a busy life and schedule.

Meanwhile, many others have to figure out how to find new housing, new transport, and new modes of coping with the loss.

Oh yeah. COVID-19, too.

Local linemen BACK TO IT!
August 25

CR
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 17

56

! in

Linn County.

I'm hearing a few neighborhood stories about lazy landlords.

Tenants still have trees on houses & garages, and excuses are being made.

School was officially delayed.

Today, Gov. Reynolds signed a waiver... one month delay, with no make-up dates.

Some schools won't be ready (75% capacity) until November, or even January.

My wife & her coworkers were back on site today, albeit only a part of it.

For those who were spared, a high degree of survivors' guilt is present.

Many Iowans, when not thinking of derecho damage, have their eyes & thoughts on Texas & Louisiana, where Hurricane Laura just reached Category 4 speed.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 18

A lot of people are comparing the derecho to Hurricane (now T.S.) Laura, which has now killed at least 3 people.

There is some envy about the news coverage.

A lot of the social media groups have run their course.

What was once a thriving support center is now losing its role in the community.

People have to deal with FEMA, adjusters, and bad landlords.

It doesn't help that it's in the late summer heat, the bars just closed due to COVID, and the whole city feels weird without its trees.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 19

Everyone was told to expect a severe storm today.

- 40 mph winds
- Golf ball-sized hail
- Deadly lightning

They were concerned about those without adequate cover.

As the storm hit Marshalltown, we watched in the end, not a drop here.

We waited. Relief.

A huge food relief day in the corridor was thwarted by truck mechanical issues.

In Wellington Heights, Chick-fil-A instead gave a ton of chicken sandwiches.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all this, UI of Iowa has 500+ COVID-19 cases, the state had a massive # of positive cases today.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 20.

FOR NOW, THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF FOOD GIVEAWAYS.

PEOPLE ARE GOING TO NEED THEM FOR A WHILE.

THE CORN IS DRYING UP, AND THE SOYBEANS ARE YELLOWING.

TODAY, I AM WINDING DOWN DERECHO DAYS. THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO SAY, BUT ALL I CAN SAY IS TO NOT FORGET IOWA WHEN YOU ARE THINKING OF THE WORLD.

FOR SOME, THE REBUILDING WILL TAKE A WHILE.

FOR SOME, THERE IS A LOT TO MOURN, TO PROCESS, AND, IN TIME, TO TELL LATER ON.

THE GOFundMe CAMPAIGNS

$19,500 OF $25,000 GOAL

REVEAL A LOT OF FAILURES IN THE HOUSING + INSURANCE WORLDS. SOME ARE ONLY GETTING 5% OF THE COST.

ORCHARDS ARE HARVESTING WHAT THEY CAN.
DERECO DAYS, DAY 22

There is still too much that needs sharing.

There are people who still don't have power,

Due to landlords making excuses.

So I'm back to it.

People are flocking to get food boxes; the USDA sent 8 semis today.

At St. Jude Church, the line for pickup was at least 1/2 mile long.

My kids wanted to hear the Come From Away soundtrack today in the car.

Listening to songs about 9/11 passengers diverted to Gander, and people rallying,

It's a Broadway musical.

Hit way too close to home, and I lost it driving.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 23

The state DHS has disaster SNAP funding (D-SNAP) for people who have lost food and have disaster expenses that cut into their economic security.

People could qualify for a month's support.

Local businesses are closing or putting people on furlough. The derecho has knocked down the already-stumbling.

At least some rain fell today.

I was at the US Cellular Center for three hours, in hopes of getting assistance. (I was successful.)

The trees seem so bare. A lot of folks say the discolored leaves make it feel like fall. They crunch the same.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 24

Finally, the mayor issued a mask mandate for Cedar Rapids.

Many birds also need new homes.

FEMA set up their disaster center today to help derecho victims.

Tanager Place is providing teams of therapists.

Driving home tonight,

I realized many city blocks have no lights at all.

No streetlights. Just a starry moon.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 25

Today, our two senators met with area nonprofits.

Our nonprofits were already struggling due to COVID-19.

The pandemic + the derecho is a double whammy.

Young Parents' Network gave 150,000 diapers out in 3 weeks.
Last year? 164,000.

How do you, as a nonprofit,

1. Serve more people than before...
2. With fewer overall resources...
3. And COVID is still a thing?

Whether served or serving,
People, in short, feel at a point of breaking...
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 26

The adjuster finally inspected the house. There is so much debris that the city is only 26% through its first pass.


He refused all donations, served over 600 meals, and got the Philadelphia Water Ice track to give ice cream to everyone.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 27

The Iowa Derecho Storm Resource Page is filled with questions like “How do you argue [with insurance] about repair costs for a house?”

A lot of folks are making stump art.

Some of it feels a certain way towards 2020. Willie got a day off.

Lost crops, farm houses, equipment & broken bins have put already stressed out farmers into further struggle.

The community foundation in CR has raised nearly $1M in recovery funds.

Meanwhile, people in more rural counties wish their voices were also heard.
Derecho Days, Day 28

Today, I walked around my neighborhood and couldn't help but pay attention to the tree breakage, and how dramatic it looked.

One branch dangled down like a limp arm.

The breakage waved, jutted and poked the air.

One was sliced in half from 15' down, leaving a burnt heart.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 29
(Labor Day)

Vivek Murthy, former U.S. Surgeon General, shared these thoughts in his book Together:

Hurricane Andrew catalyzed the process of connection that comes naturally to us all—when we give it a chance. Family, friends and strangers alike spent meaningful time in each other’s company. We learned one another’s names and shared our stories. We offered and asked each other for assistance and support. We shared both the burden of our losses and the relief of recovery.

What will this look like here?
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 30

Last night was the first powerful thunderstorm to hit CR since the derecho.

Loud thunder and lots of rain.

The storm was spotted like a cheetah over the city.

So many people still have no Internet access at home.

There is no timeline for restoration.

Because of the storm, fall weather is here at last.

But most people just want their tarps to hold.

A lot of landlords are trying shady things, with some even threatening to take damage costs out of deposits or to evict people (which is not allowed).

SCUM... HERO

Their business ethics are showing.
DERECHO DAYS, DAY 31

The storm hit corn and soybean farmers hard.
Silos were bent like paper cups.

Most, if not all, of the 10 million acres of lost crops were already being grown at a rate lower than crop prices.

More and more, climate events are happening, and people say, “Oh, it’s just weather.”

How many “just weathers” can happen before it’s changed?

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Read Emily Stochl’s Huffpost article “What it’s like to live in a city that’s had 3 ‘Once in a lifetime’ disasters in 12 years” - @brumecinddaisy