

"Bonar's intense storyline focuses on a core group of citizens spaced throughout the city during the course of the hours that changed the life and landscape of Topeka."

"And Hell Followed With It" contains dozens of dramatic photos taken by the award-winning staff of the Topeka Capital-Journal and others. In addition, a series of specially designed maps show where individuals featured in the story found themselves as the tornado approached.

[lit]

and hell followed with it

by Judith + Robin Cremer

photos contributed / originally taken by Topeka Capital-Journal.

Whenever a group of locals start talking about the "Tornado," there is rarely a need to say more to direct the discussion toward the EF-5 whirlwind that cut through the heart of Topeka on June 8, 1966. The behemoth ripped through the city blasting a half mile wide path of destruction and leaving deep emotional and physical scars on the hearts and minds of Topekans, young and old. The memory of that mighty wind resonates strongly with those who were there that Wednesday evening. The power of the experience has subsequently been passed down through stories shared by survivors that relate the awesome power of the unfettered forces of nature that were unleashed that day.

One of the vehicles helping to propel this transfer of experiences is Bonar Menninger's new book, "And Hell Followed With It: Life and Death in a Kansas Tornado" which fully documents the June 8th tornado, capturing both the history and the drama of this unforgettable event. Menninger gathered the stories, culled from over 140 interviews, to create a narrative that reads like one of the most action packed suspense novels on the market today. The fact that the reader is fully aware that this is not a story but a true life accounting of actual events makes the book all the more terrifying.

Bonar's intense storyline focuses on a core group of citizens spaced throughout the city during the course of the hours that changed the life and landscape of Topeka. The text graphically details each individual's story, relating their apprehension as the storm approaches, their terror during the time the whirlwind was actively in play, and the hopelessness they felt in the aftermath. Readers get an unparalleled view of one of the most devastating disasters to ever befall T-Town.

The book includes chapters on the history of Topeka, as well as an overview of the science of early tornado detection. This information puts things into context and gives the reader a point of reference regarding the cities warning system prior to that monumental evening of disaster.

Maps of the city placed strategically throughout the book also allows the reader to follow the twister's brutal path of destruction; beginning at Burnetts Mound, barreling through downtown and dissipating over the river near Tecumseh. Sitting at my kitchen table, I was able to look down the street and imagine the mayhem that took place as the massive winds ripped through the Oakland area. The graphic recollections in this book will undoubtedly likewise strike anyone who reads this book as they pass by key modern day landmarks described in the text throughout the city.

June 8th, 2011 will mark the 45th anniversary of the Topeka tornado. This phenomenal book brings the events of that day back to life, definitely recording them for posterity. It clarifies the facts, discusses the myths and makes the story accessible to a new generation – and it's first and foremost a good read.

I had a chance to speak with Bonar, and we talked about that eventful evening in 1966, that ultimately led to him writing "And Hell Followed With It."

First off, what motivated you to write this book in the first place?

Just a sense that the story deserved to be told after all these years. It was something I'd grown up with. I thought it was a fascinating tale, and I realized at the time of the fortieth anniversary in '06 a lot of these people were getting up in years and if it was going to be done, it had to be done now. So I felt a sense of, for lack of a better term, civic responsibility, to tell the story.

And Hell Followed With It
Life and Death in a Kansas Tornado

by Bonar Menninger

Autographed copies available through the
website: www.topekatornado.com

Available at Lloyd Zimmer, Books & Maps

The one scene from the book that drove home to me how terrifying this thing was, was when David Laird witnessed a two car garage being flung into the Capital dome like a "child would fling a dollhouse."

You know, the Capital is a pretty formidable structure, and pretty imposing, and to see something that's vastly bigger do something like that; throw a structure at it, like a monster, and then this huge roar. He said, I thought it was the end of the world, and I've tried to put myself in his

shoes at that moment, and I believe that's probably what I'd be thinking too, because it's like nothing you've ever experienced before. All of sudden its hell on earth! And where you going to go? You better make a decision real quick or you're not going to survive.

Any plans for a movie or DVD documentary? I think it'd make a fascinating movie.

Yeah, I rather see it made into a drama. That movie, "Twister," as cheesy as it was, was like the 44th bestselling movie of all time. I think there's a real fascination with TORNADOS and the things that they could do with special effects these days it wouldn't be hard to do.

The way you wrote the stories, it reads like a really suspenseful action adventure type novel, only terrifyingly true.

I appreciate that. I mean that's what I tried, because that's what I always thought of it as. It's just about the scariest thing I've ever heard about in my life, and so I tried real hard to capture the drama and the suspense. *Y seveneightfive*

heard + noted

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We all look like
streetwalkers, trying to
turn tricks
@ Kickstart Saloon

*I love my kid! I couldn't
have procreated with a
better stranger!*
@ College Hill

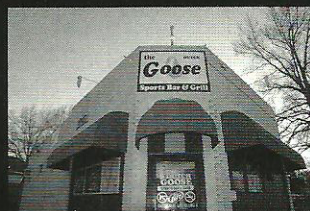
He probably learned Tokyo
Japanese. I learned redneck
Japanese @ The Office

I look like A double S today
@ The Dutch Goose

I just learned that I can
read bar codes with my
phone, cause it's smart, ya
know? @ The Boobie Trap

KU vs KSU 2nd Annual Food-Off January 29th @ the Goose

Congrats to Liz for creating the winning wings during the 2010 Dutch Goose Food-Off. Can see keep the title? Show off your foodie skills and enter the 2nd Annual Food-Off. Visit the bar for more details and to sign up.



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- TSCPL [Library]
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- Topeka Civic Theatre