

**News and Current Events :: Minneapolis Bridge Collapse - First hand account****Minneapolis Bridge Collapse - First hand account - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/8/2 16:00**

(Received the following from my Dad today. It was sent by a former neighbor that I grew up with, who now resides in Minnesota. Her friend apparently is an insurance agent.)

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I thought I would forward and email that was sent to me by a friend who was near the bridge at the time it collapsed. May our hearts and prayer go out to those who lost loved ones in this tragedy.

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Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2007 7:09 AM  
Subject: 35W Bridge....I had just passed it....

First\*I pray that none of you or your family and loved ones were anywhere near the bridge when it collapsed\*

I was out running my usual course along the Mississippi river\*I had ran underneath the bridge and was a few hundred feet on the other side when I heard this terrible loud explosion and continued creaking\*and felt the rumble\*I turned and saw the big cloud of dust and water and could only imagine that they were testing dynamite or something\*until the dust began to clear. And then it took a moment for my mind to register what had happened\*it was eerily still and quiet\*like a movie set. The bridge just sat in the river and many cars were sitting on the level pieces of roadway like they had just stopped to park. People began opening their doors and climbing out\*then you began to focus on the cars that were precariously hanging\*or stopped at a steep angle. Miraculously, many of those people also opened their doors and came out\*by this time many of us who were running or biking were accumulating on the walkway\*and seemed in shock. Some of the passengers walked over to us as if they had just been out for a walk as well\*many were obviously in shock. I comforted a girl in a Twins T-Shirt that had to be a new driver\*her entire body was shaking\*she was on the phone to her Mom trying to explain what had happened. Another woman described the feeling as sitting in her car and it just kept dropping in intervals\*bam \* bam \* bam\*her shoulder belt would put extreme pressure on her each time\*like she was being suspended and held in a dropping parachute. A very old woman was led off by a young man\*she was smiling and showing us her only injury\*a bruised knee.

The silence was eerie\*it seemed like forever before a siren could be heard \* and then it was a lone police car on the other side of the river. Quite a few men started heading to the huge blocks of pavement that were now resting in the river\*as we all realized that not everyone would be so lucky to walk to safety. I noticed several cars were almost totally submerged and could only see one wheelbase.

And then the silence turned to chaos and countless police and fire engines arrived on the scene\*fires started and there was a lot of yelling. At first none of the police seemed intent on our crowd which had formed a tight band very near the first drop of bridge\*a mix of bystanders and survivors. A terrible explosion and burst of very dark black smoke erupted and burned our lungs and eyes\*and soon we were all pushed back another few hundred feet from the destruction. I'm not even sure the police realized there were survivors in our crowd. By this time I was crying\*realizing what could have been and thinking of all the people and families that would be suffering. There was a school bus\*.and it wasn't empty.

I couldn't run back home the way I had come\*I ran up to Washington to cross 35W and looked back to where I had just been. Again\*it was like a movie setting \* there were cars up to the point of the break\*and many people just standing in the middle of the freeway. The bridge heading the other way had also become a parking lot of gawkers. People had just stopped their cars and were standing on the other bridge in disbelief. I kept running and headed back to the river on the other side \* and I couldn't stop crying. People were swarming to the river\*I saw tons of people in Twins garb and realized there must have been a game. I ran to the top of gold medal park by the Guthrie and just tried to take it all in. I kept feeling this tremendous urge to pray\*and not by myself. There were about 50 people gathered on top of the hill\*I yelled out to the crowd, "Does anyone want to pray for the people on the bridge?" I'll be honest\*they kind of looked at me like I was nuts. Was I? I yelled it again\*finally a young woman and her boyfriend (in Twins T-Shirts) raised their hands and said

d YES! And then more gathered in\*we had about 15 people standing in a small circle on top of this hill\*we held hands and prayed\*

And then I watched and listened for awhile\*I listened to the countless conversations of people around me.

"Mom\*I'm fine\*we had already parked our car."

"It's on the news in Texas? I'm standing right here man\*you can't believe it."

"I'm ok\*really\*wait, I have another call coming in."

Suddenly I had this urge to get home and make sure Mark and Travis were safe. I knew neither of them were in that area\*but I needed to KNOW. I was the only one running away from the fallen bridge. There were now hundreds gathering all along the shore\*people were coming out of the Guthrie\*office buildings and the countless condos along the rivers edge. It seemed everyone was on their cell phone\*

I turned up 4th and saw Mark coming down the street on his bike\*I just stopped and cried. He held me and we just stood for what seemed like a long time. He told me he had just talked to Travis who was on his way to St. Cloud\*he was safe. Mark had been headed to a softball game when someone called him with the news. He knew I had left to run\*he came back to find me. Nothing mattered at that moment except knowing that we were all safe. And I began the inevitable 'what if's'? What if I had been one minute slower? It was really hot when I had stepped outside\*I didn't start running right away as I normally do\*I was fiddling with my Ipod and even thought of walking down the one block to the river instead of running and changed my mind.

Life can change in a moment.

Later we watched the news in awe\*as I'm sure many of you did. Calls from friends and family came making sure we were ok. And most ended with, "I love you \* so glad you're safe". And nothing else really matters\*.

And as my mind tends to do in times of destruction and tragedy\*it eventually turned to protection. I thought of how many cars were insured by State Farm\*how many lives? Did everyone have adequate protection for whatever their loss would be? Had they spoken to their agent or team member lately? Did we do our job of taking care of them? Advising them? We have opportunities every day to take care of people. And we never know when tragedy will strike. We are confident that it won't \* just as everyone on or around that bridge was last night. But it does\*and it's our job to make sure we advise\*and recommend\*and most importantly care.

This was an experience I will always remember\*I thank God I was that minute slower\*and I pray for the safety and wellbeing of all those who were there. And I pray that the closest you and your family were to the tragedy was through your TV.

Thanks for listening\*.

Lori

**Re: Minneapolis Bridge Collapse - First hand account - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/8/2 23:58**

Mike wrote:

Quote:  
----- I heard this terrible loud explosion and continued creaking\*and felt the rumble\*I turned and saw the big cloud of dust and water and could only imagine that they were testing dynamite or something\*  
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After I heard this news, I read everything I could find about it on the web. One question that kept recurring is was there an explosion? Now this account is the first one I have read that said there was one, or it sounded like one. Wonder why we do not read of it elsewhere? Or is this sound consistent with a bridge breaking up?

This incident is a grim reminder how life can change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...

Mike, thanks for sharing this email...very interesting and informative.

ginnyrose

**Re: Minneapolis Bridge Collapse - First hand account, on: 2007/8/3 8:32**

Mike,

Thank you for sharing this.

I don't know what to say. I heard the breaking news over here as it happened and think there was enough unregistered shock in the way it was being reported to understand how serious was what was happening.

It doesn't seem possible that such large piece of engineering should simply fall down with no warning... like previous signs of cracking.

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss () , on: 2007/8/3 12:19**

Hi dorcas and ginny...

I think that you would be surprised how unsafe many "well-built" structures are.

As an engineer, I've noticed that many "structures" go into production even though there is a certain calculated risk involved. Bridges, roads, construction projects, vehicles, etc... all carry a calculated risk. Even our over-the-counter drugs have been marketed with a known calculated risk. The shuttle program had a calculated catastrophic disaster risk of 1 in 1000 flights. Sadly, we now realize that the risk was at least 1 in 75. The "air bag" safety features in our vehicles can potentially (and have on occasion) result in a death or serious injury. However, the risk calculation must be great enough to warrant either further study or alternative solutions. Sadly, this is a part of modern life. Our lives are "but a vapor" and can end at any moment of any day -- even in the "safest" of activities.

There will need to be an intense look into this disaster, as well as our nation's infrastructure, before any sort of conclusion can be made into cause.

Regardless, our prayers are with the victims and families of the injured or deceased.

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**Sinking Sand ... - posted by Rahman, on: 2007/8/3 13:37**

Two quotes from this thread ...

"Life can change in a moment."

and ...

"It doesn't seem possible that such large piece of engineering should simply fall down with no warning... like previous signs of cracking."

--- This whole thing made me think of that "large piece of engineering" we both trust in, and rip and run back and forth on everyday called "the American Economy" ...

Both have shown previous signs of cracking, both have been reported on as such, and of both nobody takes heed until a catastrophe :-o ---

**Re: Sinking Sand ... - posted by wallbuilder, on: 2007/8/3 15:58**

Living in this area, it's been pretty heart wrenching watching this unfold. Even more distressing for me was the response at my church the night this happened. I went to church with a great urgency to gather with others to pray for any survivors to be rescued. The tone when I arrived was a ho-hum attitude as people casually discussed the events. I expressed the need to really pray. Our pastor did lead us then, and we all cried out to God, but it was about 3 minutes of prayer, then he went on with the song service. I was beside myself, ready to burst out in intercession, so I had to leave the room. I went out and found my friends in the sanctuary and we really prayed. Eventually, 5 others from the Bible study came in and prayed with us, as the Pastor released them to.

But honestly, what on earth is it going to take for us to be found on our knees and have a desire and even urgency to pray for lost humanity? I fear it will be nothing less than more terror attacks and disasters. I don't know.

But here is the web link to a great word from John Piper about this:

([http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/745\\_putting\\_my\\_daughter\\_to\\_bed\\_two\\_hours\\_after\\_the\\_bridge\\_collapsed/](http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/745_putting_my_daughter_to_bed_two_hours_after_the_bridge_collapsed/)) Putting My Daughter to Bed Two Hours After the Bridge Collapsed

**Re: Sinking Sand ... - posted by Rahman, on: 2007/8/3 17:01**

Wallbuilder you wrote:

"But honestly, what on earth is it going to take for us to be found on our knees and have a desire and even urgency to pray for lost humanity? I fear it will be nothing less than more terror attacks and disasters. I don't know."

--- Terror attacks and natural disasters don't affect us all ... In America we are a population of 300 million on a continent 1500 miles tall and 3000 miles wide, where the greatest majority of us watch such small events on TV in the comfort and safety of our living rooms saying, "Awww those poor people, and blithely mouthing there go I save but by the grace of God" ...

To get our attention it's gonna take something that affects the greater majority of us, something say that hits us where we really live and worship ... our pocket books ...

Rev.3

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ---