After almost a decade in the newspaper business I've gotten used to holding a printed product in my hand soon after I send it to press.

Newspapers are often back the same day we send them to press, and even the magazines we print have a quick turnaround.

That's probably why waiting for the book we recently finished on the April 24 tornado and the recovery has just about driven me crazy. I've been accused of being impatient anyway, but I'm like a child waiting on Christmas hoping the delivery truck will hurry up and get here.

Apparently I'm not alone. Our phones have been ringing off the hooks with readers wanting to know when the copies will be available. We had hoped to get them here by Christmas, but it's starting to look like that's not going to happen. For anyone who wanted to give the book as a Christmas gift, we will have gift certificates that can be redeemed for copies of the book available at The Herald office.

Putting together Blown Away has been a tremendous undertaking. The book features all of the best work we did after the storm and throughout the recovery, plus many never before seen photos and stories.

Jamie and I have put in many hours outside of our normal duties to make this project a success, and I can't wait to finally have a copy in my hands. Trying to put the full impact of the storm in perspective is an overwhelming task. Attempting to put the amount of kindness, strength and determination shown throughout the recovery is an even larger challenge.

The process of proofing a book moves a lot slower than newspapers. When we proof our magazines, we only have to print the files that we are going to send to press and can make any corrections before they are printed. With this book, the printer had to send us pages in a much more complex format, and the process moved much slower.

We apologize for it taking so long, but I truly believe that it's going to be worth the wait.

This book is our best effort to tell the story of a year that will be a part of Yazoo's history long after we're gone. I'm grateful to Scott Jones, Fran Twiner, Taylor Kykendall, Van Foster, Melanie Thortis and others for sharing their photos with us for the project.

We'll let you know when the books finally get here. Until then don't be surprised if you see me looking out the window like I'm waiting on the mailman.

In the meantime I'm looking foward to spending Christmas with my family. Christmas is always a special time for our family, and it's even more special for us now that our son has gotten old enough to get excited about it all.

He informs me every day now that “I’m not bad, I’m sweet.” I guess he’s making sure Santa gets the message. I might try that myself. If I say it enough, maybe people will start believing it. Merry Christmas.