

with fascination my neighbor's heavy power boat trying to mount another facade of the poor broken house. It finally made it, and both banged against the front porch!

I've managed to be comfortable (and I haven't been afraid) but I've been lucky. The Kelmans, at the corner of 20th Street and the Boulevard, urged me repeatedly to come up to them. The poor Irelands have had no heat since yesterday, when their furnace was flooded. I asked them to come here, but Les wanted to keep the oil stove burning, so that their pipes wouldn't freeze. Eleanor said they'd be up today, but they'd have to have a truck bring them because their street is flooded even at low tide. Here the water recedes quite quickly when the tide begins to go down. It would be possible to take the car out, but to go where? I understand many places are completely under water all the time, because the dunes are gone and the ocean and bay water meet. I don't believe they did on this street.

There has been no electricity in Beach Haven since last night, and no water either. I've asked the Websters to come here too, but he's afraid the car would be mired in the mud that surrounds their garage, and it's doubtful if they could get through Ship Bottom anyway. More later.

Wednesday, cont. (written Thursday night)

Yesterday's noon bay tide, which was building up when I wrote the above, was terrific, the highest of the storm. Even the usually calm people began to sound concerned. The Websters planned to get an official truck ride to Manahawkin, where their son would meet them to take them to north Jersey. So far as I know, they made it. (Beach Haven telephones are out today) The Irelands asked to be picked up by truck at low tide and taken to the Surf City Fire House. They felt I should do the same.

I tried to find out whether the next high tide was expected to be better or worse and got conflicting reports -- always a help in waking up one's mind. My chief concern was not the water, which I had weathered alright with only two inches in the garage, but the unbelievable stuff which had collected in my front yard -- and the implications of it -- several sides of an obviously substantial house, a floor of a room complete with green linoleum tile, a big boat, a battering ram of a piece of piling a good fifteen inches in diameter, and what must have been tons of miscellaneous debris -- steps, doors, walks, shutters, a huge billboard from the Loveladies development advertising a "Salt Spray Model Home", and much, much more. With the bay breaking into heavy surf on shore all this stuff floated and pounded against any obstacle and I know I'd be anything but comfortable listening to the tremendous blows during the night, wondering if any of them meant the foundation had been smashed. Also, the electricity went off at noon, which meant no heat and no light, although I could keep both warm and illuminated with the kerosene appliances and the fireplace. When I called Peg Kellan (all of us kept calling each other at frequent intervals) to tell her I was thinking of going to the Fire House, she insisted I go to them, as they had current, and I agreed.

The island north of 25th Street in Surf City had been impassable all day and there was no telephone service to Harvey Cedars and Barnegat Light. When I got to the Kelmans, Peg decided in her generous way to go to the Fire House to get the Irelands. She was gone a long time, and finally arrived with the five members of the Boots family, who lived in an ocean front house north of Surf City. Anne came in and announced desperately: "All that we have is in our hands and on our backs -- our house is gone!" And so began the story of what had been happening on the island.

Tuesday

They were driven out of their house early ~~morning~~ and went to the Surf City Fire House. Later they decided to go back to try to save some of their possessions brought out some records of their business (mail order slips) and so on, but the car got stuck and they had to abandon it. (They were able to salvage it later). A

That section of the island was among those worst hit. The Bettelheims, who live on the bay side opposite the Boats, fared well, but a great many of the Botts' possessions are scattered around their lot. . There was great sadness as one asked about the house of this or that friend -- The Grosses' house is completely gone and so is the Dudley's. Our whole tract, with the fourteen or more houses on it, including the good old house, is wiped away. The Galnas house is said to be standing. The DeGesarets, one of the most imposing on the island, all gone. Even Small's, with its terrific bulkhead is awry and askew. The Grants' house came through well.

Loss of life mounts. The swirling waters formed potholes and trucks and even amphibious jeeps blundered into them. I was worried about the Pietsches and the Ash family, and many others in Harvey Cedars and Barnegat Light. There was an unbelievable lack of information in this day of radio communication, chiefly because the ocean and bay formed an inlet just north of North Beach. (Later learned that there had been four of them in Harvey Cedars alone!)

I came back from the Kelwans' this (Thursday) morning and found everything in good order, with the current back on. The debris had shifted around, so I knew I would not have had an easy night if I had stayed in the house. I went to the firehouse to see if I could be of service and also to pick up some neighbors who had spent the night there,, including the Dryers. Most of them were waiting to get off the island at the next low tide. It was apparently very difficult -- almost impossible -- for outside calls to come through, but I had an occasional one. Honey Combs called and said the newspaper headlines were terrific -- sounded as though Long Beach Island had been wiped off the map and I guess some parts of it just about are.

All day long Harvey Cedars and Barnegat Light residents were being evacuated by helicopter, some to the grade school on the island, then by bus or truck in low tide to the high school on the mainland, some directly to the high school. The drone of helicopter motors was almost constant. For want of anything more important to do, I clocked them, and they went overhead at the rate of one every two minutes! All stores are closed, with men working at relief and clean-up of the most necessary kind. There are no newspapers, no mail. Food may be a problem. The Red Cross supplied soup and sandwiches at the Fire House. A Navy truck went from house to house (not here!) with milk and bread, and a bread truck was stationed at the Fire House all day. It was possible to drive along the boulevard in Surf City, with only a few flooded crossings, but side streets were dangerous with debris and fallen wires. There was an epidemic of flat tires because of loose nails. Most of the damage in Surf City was on the ocean front. I ventured up a few streets, and was appalled at the number of houses smashed or hanging crazily over the beach. (This damage seemed minor when I went north on the island later).

News of friends and neighbors began to come in. The Pietsches were evacuated by helicopter, against their will (although they enjoyed the ride!). They had rigged up their furnace so that it functioned without electricity, had plenty of food and candles, but there was no water, and a danger of typhoid. They went to a niece in Amish Pennsylvania country. Brett Ash had come back to the island as usual Tuesday evening, couldn't get home to Harvey Cedars and spent the next two nights at the Surf City Fire House, trying to get news of his family. Doris, Brett and the youngest boy were re-united at the high school in Mahahawken, but the two older boys hid from the helicopters, so they could stay in Harvey Cedars with the stand-by crew.

*but I had more than enough for myself and any possible guests.

Harvey Cedars and the Holgate section at the southern end of the island were the two hardest hit. The weather was still bad today (Thursday) but the worst of the storm was obviously over and people ventured out again (including me!). The ocean had come through at the circle in Ship Bottom. Bulldozed sand made barriers six or eight feet high there. There is a roadblock at 24 Street in Surf City and communication with Harvey Cedars and Barnegat Light is by boat from the mainland. A group of Harvey Cedars officials set up an operating government in Ship Bottom.

Only those with urgent business are permitted to come over the bridge, but there are the usual few who manage by pull or by accident to get through. Anne Scots' sister and her husband and a family of three friends among them. The Scots are the guests of the Kelmans, and the five additional made a company of ten! so Peg and Fran Kelman spent Thursday night with me. The Irelands are still without heat, but Les would listen to no pleas to come here. Electricity was spasmodic -- off ten or twelve hours, then on again for awhile; on in this area, off there and so on. But there was enough to keep you going and to give you spirit. With heat, light, water, radio and even TV, you can't feel too sorry for yourself. Water has to be boiled, of course, but at least we have it.

Friday

The high water mark is 14" at the back of this house, on the outside of the garage doors. Inside it's only 2", which speaks well for the seals. The water was undoubtedly higher at the front, but I can't tell because there is too much junk piled around -- so much so that you can't walk out there at all.

Here is an odd thing: I had no fear at all during the worst of the storm, but on this morning, while the Kelmans were still here having breakfast, Eleanor Ireland called in a bad state of nerves (and no wonder!); There was no electricity (here either); she'd been to the Fire House and men were struggling with a bad water break of some kind in the road; Les had had three nose bleeds; she heard a VERY BAD NORTHEASTER was expected Friday night; she and Les had had it and were going to leave. What was I going to do? I reported this to the Kelmans and they said they thought they'd leave too. The un-ease was contagious and I confess I began to think of going for the first time. Then the sun came out, the electricity came back, the weather reports predicted rain but no high wind, and tides were to be "a little" above normal. After taking 9 feet above normal, "a little" didn't seem ominous. Also, some people were being permitted to return to the island, if their houses were sound and they had utilities. So I stayed, and it was alright. The Kelmans stayed too. Les and Eleanor went to his brother in north Jersey and this morning I had a message that they were alright. They'd had a wretched time, with two nights spent at the Fire House, and were wise to go. The current was still spasmodic. It rained, but there was no Northeaster. And the Aame opened for business!! That seemed like a very good omen, specially when I was able to buy a little bunch of daffodils for 19¢ and the first asparagus of the season! (for considerably more!). Peg and Fran came in late in the evening to borrow my second kerosene stove, stayed for a few drinks, and celebrated having their house to themselves again, the Scots having moved to a house being loaned to them by friends.

Saturday - Sunday

I started down the boulevard to see how far I could get, found the pastor's car in front of the church. He had been evacuated along with everyone else in that part of the island (he and his group in a garbage truck!). He sent his wife on to her family, and stayed to work among the thousands of evacuees at the high school. I stopped to see if I could be of service and off and on I've been there since. The church became distribution center for clothes and truck loads of them had to be sorted and organized.

I acquired a "displaced person" for a little while, Joan Singly, a teacher at the Island grade school. She had been evacuated, was brought back because she is a member

of the Beach Haven First Aid Squad, found no heat in her house and her car damaged, so came here. She is bright, and young and pretty and it was very pleasant having her.

The high school operation is a story in itself. According to all accounts, they did a terrific job efficiently, and willingly and with good spirits. They served meals to and provided sleeping space for 800 persons at a time, and processed many thousands who were brought there and then were able to go on to havens of their own.

There is a sort of martial law on the island, with state police, local police, Coast Guard, Army and Navy personnel -- many of them obviously armed -- all over the place. You may leave the island, but you'd have a job getting back. Property owners (non-resident) as of Sunday, are escorted over by police car -- if they live in accessible areas and have proof of ownership -- and then escorted back again. Yesterday the Combs drove all the way down from New York, only to be turned back at the barrier on the bridge. One reason for the restrictions is looting and the other is to give the big machinery a chance to operate. The sound of bulldozers, pushing up sand into some semblance of dunes, is a constant hum during daylight hours. There is a six o'clock curfew, strictly enforced. Even down here, where there is rarely much traffic at this time of year, I am aware of the silence and the closed-up feeling at night.

The northern part of the island is still inaccessible except by boat. Pastor Patterson went there this afternoon -- to Manahawken, to Waretown, by boat to Barnegat Light, and back the same way.....Mail came to the island for the first time today and was available at the Ship Bottom P.O. I found 14 letters from anxious friends (3 of them from Louise Lang!) It had been almost impossible to get phone calls through until Sunday, when I had a call from Eie Dudley. Frank had flown over the island and reported their house and all of the houses in that area -- DeCesare's, Katzman's Kapp's, ours and all the new ones on the tract -- gone without a trace. Loveladies, on the bay side, did pretty well. The ocean came across the island but the lagoons acted as sluiceways so the houses were spared.

I've added another occupation to my life's list -- short order cook! Joan Singly was needed at the First Aid Station in Beach Haven first thing Sunday morning to help get breakfasts for police and workers and so on, so I drove her down at 6:something, washed dishes and learned how to scramble eggs and "hash brown" on a big grill. Never know when such experience might be handy!

Hop Up

Dr. Todd and his son came up Sunday and cleared away the worst of the debris for me. Even before they had unloaded their rakes, they were challenged by security officers, and then again while they were working -- a comforting indication of the police service we've had. People are asked to stay in their own boroughs, ordered back if they stray, and rubbernecking is firmly discouraged.

I continued working at the church, mostly helping to sort the mountains of clothing that kept coming in, but also typing and running the antique multigraph and addressograph machines. By Wednesday I was able to get a pass for Mr. Pratt, my good old mother's helper, to come to the island. Meeting him at the barrier on the bridge with his "passport" reminded me of an uneasy crossing of the border from Lebanon to Syria! We tackled the garage first, taking everything out of it. During the storm, and for days thereafter, the whole island was covered with a thick slime, about the consistency of pancake batter, and treacherously slippery. Rain didn't wash it away, it just re-activated it. A film of that was left in the garage. Mr. Pratt scrubbed with a stiff brush and I flushed with the hose. It was a full morning's work.

The borough came with heavy machinery and removed a battering ram of a piece of piling and the 10 x 12 section of a floor from the front of the house. The Loveladies

Development man came for his big billboard. The rest of the stuff Mr. Pratt managed to distribute into neat piles for later disposal -- all except the 25-foot wall of a house, which will have to be broken up to be moved. We jacked that up so that the border of iris, which it covered, could breathe, if not grow.

By Thursday or Friday, a week after the storm, the various breaches in Harvey Cedars had been filled sufficiently to be traversable by jeep, and the barrier was moved from the northern part of Surf City to the beginning of Harvey Cedars. The Fitches' niece drove them down from Pennsylvania on Friday. I had been able to get a pass for them, to be houseguests here, but they decided to go back after a visit to the Grant house (which Frank was to care-take in their absence!) and a trip up to Harvey Cedars barrier. I went with them and really saw the beginning of the total destruction; We had been able to come to the island the day after the '44 hurricane, and we thought that was dreadful, but this was complete devastation.

The Harvey Cedars officials decided to have an "open house" for property owners on Sunday. They were met at the old coastguard station in Harvey Cedars (still intact) and taken to their homes by jeep. They could stay a few hours, if they wished and then were taken back.

The synod supplied Pastor Patterson with a jeep and he had been going up to Barnegat Light since Friday. He decided to have church services on Sunday and I was able to convince him that as treasurer, I should accompany him, so I had my first view of Harvey Cedars, or what's left of it. People were already saying: "You should have seen it last week!" but it was still an indescribably savage landscape, totally unfamiliar except for an occasional landmark - a traumatic experience. Our hold house (and the ones that were on the shore side with it) is gone without a trace -- literally, there isn't even a piece of rubble left to say where it had been, just a flat expanse of sand, level with the sea, that continues over what had been the road and out to the open bay, filling in the lagoon and the little stream that used to run under the bridge. The old bay lot is way inland.

The only "road" in Harvey Cedars is the track running north and south. In many places, where the bulldozers have been working, it is flanked by walls of piled sand higher than the jeep. The entire town will have to be re-surveyed to determine where streets and lot lines were.....As usual in these coastal storms, the damage scallops in and out -- after complete devastation there will be an area that is comparatively undamaged. Houses on piling seem to have had a better chance than others, though there are many hanging askew on their pilings, and many groups of pilings with no houses on top of them. Several houses are perched high on pilings out in open water. The geography of the coastline has changed considerably.....Bulkheads seem to have counted for nothing. Grossos, Dudleys and Katmans all had new heavy bulkheads and all were destroyed as well as the houses. Ryan Small's house, that had a bulkhead twice the size and strength of the usual one, was shattered.....There are many grotesque sights: There is no sign of the Grosso's house, but a little white entrance fence, with its sign: "V.A.J. Grosso" is still there. The old Bible Conference building, which many thought should be condemned as unsafe, served as the refuge for all the people in the southern part of Harvey Cedars, and then as helicopter evacuation center.

Although the damage in Harvey Cedars isn't total (it was reported that there were only 14 houses left standing) it is difficult to see how the borough can function financially. Street and water line construction alone will be a staggering expense and for the most part, the houses left are the little ones on the bay side; the big tax producers on the ocean have disappeared.

Barnegat Light was comparatively lightly hit. Some ocean front houses are gone, and several streets have had bad damage, but superficially, at any rate, the town looks

the same. In fact, those stardy Scandinavians give you the impression everyone is making an awful fuss! I suppose their stoit, sea-going boats gave them a feeling of security, and then too, most of them haven't travelled down through Harvey Cedars.

As a matter of fact, a ride through the center of the island from Surf City to Beach Haven gives no indication of what has been going on. Travel to and from the island is now free again, except for Harvey Cedars and Helgate. I'm sure a number of the week-end sightseers will be disappointed and will wonder, too, what all the fuss was about.

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Finally, I became a displaced person myself on Thursday of this week. The mid-day weather reports said tides of from 2 to 3 feet above normal could be expected. It was full moon time (I used to think that high-tide-full-moon business was an old wives' tale!) and a storm was coming up the coast. Ordinarily that would be nothing to worry much about, but with no dunes except the loose sand they've pushed up, the island is vulnerable. I didn't like it, but I had no idea of leaving, until at about five o'clock, two policemen drove up to the door, said they expected high tides on the bay at 11 o'clock and would like me to evacuate myself. No hurry, but get out well before high tide time. The firehouse would be open if I had no place else to go.

Well, I discovered when policemen tell you to get you, you go. (they didn't come around during the big storm -- there was no advance warning and then they were too busy taking care of people in real trouble, I suppose. It was rainy and gusty, a real Northeaster. I called Alice and planned to drive to Toms River. Then I called the Todds to tell them, because I thought they might check up on me in the storm. They insisted I come to them, as their house is in a specially high part of Beach Haven; said it was silly to drive that distance in the violent rain. So that's where I road out that storm .. I need not have gone; the water didn't come over here, but floodcean did break through several streets in Surf City and for awhile poor old Harvey Cedars was out off again.

Now I hope we can get the dunes -- and ourselves -- stabilized, so that every storm or threat of a storm won't send us off to the mainland. A couple of false alarms will probably give us back our feeling of complacency.