

Morning Star, Monday, September 9, 1996 *

AFTER HURRICANE FRAN

While its steeple is missing, church's foundation is firm

By MARTY MINCHIN

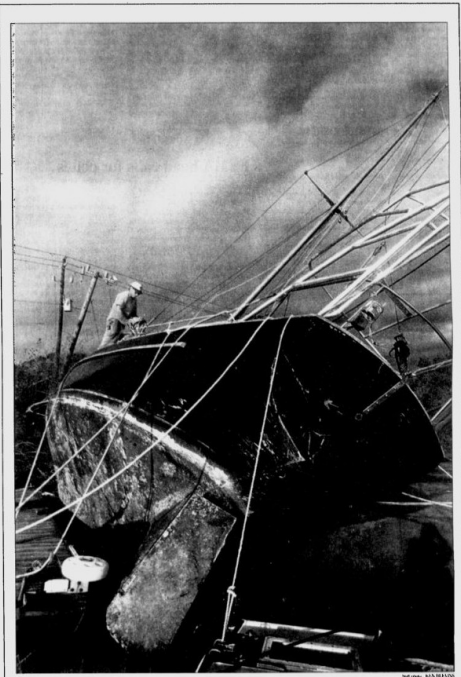
steepie succumbed to Hurricane Fran. ... The pile of rubble that used to be Wilmington's tallest steeple left the Rev. Mike Queen with no choice but to change his sermon.

He talked about the history of the steeple and the act of building it, but reminded his congregation to keep things in perspective. "It was just a steeple. It was a thing and not life," he said.

He checked up a bit when he told his congregation about a lady from Florida who had met a mission team from First Baptist that went down to help after Hurricane Andrew — already sending a check for the new steeple.

Many people shed tears when the steeple was demolished Saturday morning, picking up a piece of brick or coping with a remembrance.

The church is rebuilding the steeple and will meet in its downtown building next week. But Rev. Queen urged congregants to stay focused on people in need.



Jeff Ray of Wilmington looks over his sailboat Friday morning after Hurricane Fran hit the North Carolina coast. The 41-foot boat was washed ashore along Summer Rest Road.

Docking spaces for area boaters slipped away in the storm's wake

By MAIL CARPENTER

Mark Thomall used his 51-foot sailboat, Spirit, up to a dock at the Hilton Sunday morning and aimed like a pirate when he found treasure.

People just don't have anywhere to go," said Capt. Chris Wain of Sea Tow, a towing and rescue company that has been working with the Coast Guard to move boats after the storm.

Marina off N.C. 421. He's putting many of the marina's boats onto dry land until crews can rebuild the damaged docks.

Beach residents get first grim look at houses

Wrightsville Beach stayed closed, leaving its property owners fuming

By HOLLY ROBERTSON and KRISTINA BARTLETT

NORTH TOPSAIL BEACH — All that's left of Mable Earley's oceanfront home is some soggy furniture and broken walls and windows.



Jean Nunamacher sorts through her water-soaked belongings Sunday morning after her home in Surf Condoowners in Surf City, N.C., was one of several buildings that lost their roofs in Hurricane Fran.

"I think it's God's way of showing us who's boss," she said as she dumped swimmers into a black garbage bag. Mayor Marty Bostic and Mrs. Earley's family helped load vehicles into a Drexel as a steady drizzle dampened the day.

scoured the town Sunday looking through rubble and marsh for six people reported missing, but they found no one.

The National Guard and town officials began ferrying permanent North Topsail Beach residents into the heavily damaged town around noon. Residents were allowed 30 minutes to pick up belongings, Mr. Bostic said.

As they climbed the three flights of stairs to their condominium at The Surf, it included the Oklahoma City bombings.

NO DIESEL, NO FISHES Topsail man, dog feel Fran's wrath tied to end of a rope

NORTH TOPSAIL BEACH

As the waters rose Thursday night around his home, Len Groglio did the only thing he could think of: He tied a rope around himself, hauled it up his battered home, and held his dog in his arms for two torturous hours as they were slammed by Hurricane Fran.

The storm surge came in, and it didn't make it. Mr. Groglio's rope snapped, but with the force of the tide and wind, the shingles and wood rotted.

Earlier Thursday, Mr. Groglio's wife, Lisa, had taken their children and left him to complete last storm preparations while they sat in the car.

He just managed to hold onto the dog and we pulled away," he said. "I don't know what night of my life."

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Harry Nunamacher said they were prepared for the worst. "When they opened the door," he said, "I never thought it would be like this," said a teary Mrs. Nunamacher, who lives part of the year with her husband in Sumnerville, N.C., and part of the year on the island.

Would take suggestions for walk-on hours back to the Board of Aldermen, eventually shrank and said the beach would open at 8 a.m. to residents with car decks and driver's licenses.

Caroline Beck, car snaked down US 421 to Myrtle Grove Road as people lined up for a chance to cross the bridge and get a glimpse of the homes they left Thursday.

The outer wall in the living room was pushed inward under a water-damaged ceiling. Tufts of insulation were strewn around a heater and furnace, and a fine film of sand covered everything from a broken VCR to the countertops.

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He began a section-by-section description of damage, but the crowd grew increasingly restless. "We know all that from watching CNN," one woman shouted. "Tell us when we can get back on the island."

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"I know little more about my house than you know about yours," Mr. McKim said, and the crowd booted with dejection. "I opened my door and then closed it again."

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Owner Grant, a former candidate for mayor of the town, asked if residents couldn't just walk across the bridges to check their properties.

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"If we can survive in town, I think we can survive at the beach," said Rev. Queen.

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SCENES FROM

fish quickly — because they'll die otherwise.

ing tanks need to be filtered and water needs to circulate from top to bottom to allow animals to breathe. Also, circulating water helps waste from building to toxic levels.

Paul Barrington will be on the beach releasing animals as fast as he could — a collection that took three days to build up.

Mr. Barrington's collection includes sharks, barracudas, and squid and snook, a rare fish found off the coast line.

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Stormy tempests lead to violence

Some families didn't exactly spend their time bonding when Hurricane Fran hit them without lights, cable or anywhere to go.

New Haven County Sheriff Joe McQueen said a unusually high number of domestic assaults — many involving guns and knives — were reported during Hurricane Fran.

But Mr. McKim, who was shouted down when he said he

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Without power, animals would soon lack oxygen to live. The hold-