

## AFTER HURRICANE FRAN

### Storm's wake only adds to trailer tenants' woes

By **BETTIE FENNEL**  
Staff Writer

Tenants who live in a Farley Drive trailer park say they had enough problems before Hurricane Fran slammed through, but can't afford to move.

On Tuesday, some said the trailers were in bad condition before Fran, which only added to their misery. Tenants said the landlord, Sparky Cunningham, has been slow to clear the park and repair their trailers.

They claimed Mr. Cunningham ran off a Salvation Army van that was bringing food to residents, a charge the landlord denied.

"He takes advantage of people who need a place to stay immediately," said Richard Heath, who lives at 2017 Farley Court, off Kerr Avenue. Mr. Heath, a 3½-year resident, said most tenants are lucky to make \$250 a week, which doesn't leave them enough to pay rent, buy food and make a deposit on a new place to live.

Tenants said rent is about \$90 a week, plus water, power, and garbage. Charles "Bubba" Franks III, who is being evicted, said the

weekly charge comes out to be about \$138 a week.

Mr. Heath said he is being evicted because of a verbal confrontation with the landlord over debris in the driveway.

Tenants cleared a path through the tree-blocked entrance, Mr. Heath said, but Mr. Cunningham blocked it again when he cut up the fallen tree.

Mr. Cunningham said that was unavoidable, and the entrance was cleared Tuesday.

He said Mr. Heath is angry over his eviction for cursing Zena Heath, his wife. He said other tenants are being kicked out for not paying rent, not picking up beer bottles and trash outside the trailers, having loud parties, fighting among themselves and violating other park rules.

The trailers are not in bad shape, Mr. Cunningham said. They're "like an old pair of dungarees — if you take care of them, they're usable," he said.

Thomas Richardson, who works in the shipping and receiving department at Columbia Cape Fear Memorial Hospital, said trees felled by Fran knocked holes in the roof of three of four rooms in the



Heather Smith, eight months pregnant, plays with 15-month-old Mercedes. She says the landlord wouldn't cut trees off their trailer.

trailer he has rented for about three years.

He said Mr. Cunningham gave him \$50 to buy a tarp to keep out the rain but returned the tarp, saying the \$41 price tag was too much. Mr. Richardson said he and a friend nearly fell through the roof trying to put plastic over the holes.

Mr. Cunningham questioned why he should spend nearly \$50 for a tarp when he could add a little more money and buy the materials for permanent repairs.

Heather Smith, who is expecting

a baby in about four weeks, said her family moved about a month ago from Carolina Beach to a one-bedroom travel trailer in Mr. Cunningham's park. They wanted to be closer to the hospital and her husband's job at an auto body shop.

After the storm, she said, her husband was fired because he stayed out of work one day to cut trees off the trailer. The landlord wouldn't do it, she said.

She said Mr. Cunningham gave them plastic and duct tape to make temporary repairs themselves.

### Kure's oldest homes take most of storm's force

By **KRISTINA BARTLETT**  
Staff Writer

The mayor of Kure Beach, one of the beach towns hardest hit by Hurricane Fran, gave the first report Tuesday on the extensive damage caused by the storm.

Mayor Betty Medlin said town officials would continue to restrict access to the beach. Access from Ocean Boulevard is still restricted to town residents, property owners and a handful of contractors coming to repair damaged homes.

The mayor didn't know when the town would be opened to the public.

"We're taking that day by day," she said. "We are from this standpoint, going to protect our citizens."

She spoke at the New Hanover County administration building with town commissioners Steve Bowman and Glen Ivey.

The storm surge that poured over the beach starting around 7:30 p.m. Thursday damaged at least 200 homes, mostly in the town's oldest sections, she said. About 25 homes are lost, mostly along Fort Fisher Boulevard, or U.S. 421 South, from K Avenue to the town's southern tip.

She said the Fort Fisher Historic Site Museum and the seawall at Fort Fisher are not damaged.

Part of the Tradewinds Motel collapsed when the water surge took out the sand supporting it, and Atlantic Avenue, a beach road that joined the fishing pier Hurricane Bertha destroyed, is gone.

"We will try to repair that as soon as possible," she said.

She said parts of the town had power, water and sewer and almost 80 percent of the residents had returned since the Snows Cut Bridge was opened at noon Sunday.

"There were people sitting on the porches just trying to get a

**'You must remain on your property and remain on Kure Beach. Any violators will be arrested.'**

Mayor Betty Medlin

breeze before the power went out" Sunday night, said Sallie Faucette, a Kure Beach resident who works at Pirate Fishing and Cruise Boats on the Carolina Beach Docks. She said that Carolina Beach business plans to open this weekend.

Only Kure Beach residents and property owners can enter the town through a checkpoint on Ocean Boulevard. That rule and a 24-hour curfew, enforced more strictly between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., will remain until further notice.

"By limiting access to Kure Beach to emergency personnel and by keeping traffic to a minimum," cleanup is faster and easier, the mayor said.

"You must remain on your property and remain on Kure Beach," she added about residents staying in town. "Any violators will be arrested."

The officials said some people had been ticketed for trespassing during an emergency state. They would not say how many.

The Fort Fisher Trading Post, a grocery store on Fort Fisher Boulevard, is open and feeding emergency work crews with donations from Ocean View Restaurant, Freddie's Ocean Side Grill and Big Daddy's Restaurant, said Trading Post owner Donald Lewis.

"They've done an excellent job," he said of emergency crews and National Guardsmen. "They've kept people from looting."