



"A rising tide lifts all boats." ~ American proverb

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62

The following pages are a collection of memories and photos of a severe nor'easter that embedded itself forever in the minds of those who lived on the barrier islands of Cape May County in March of 1962.

The Ash Wednesday Storm of 1962 occurred on March 6-8, 1962 along the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States. It was considered by the U.S. Geological Survey to be one of the most destructive storms ever to affect the mid-Atlantic states. One of the ten worst storms in the United States in the 20th century, it lingered through five high tides over a three day period. The massive storm was caused by an unusual combination of three pressure areas, combined with atmospheric conditions of the Spring equinox which normally cause exceptionally high tides. The storm stalled in the mid-Atlantic for almost 3 days, pounding coastal areas with continuous rain, high winds, and tidal surges, and dumping large quantities of snow inland for several hundred miles.

Flood Storm 1962 March 6-7-8-
 Estimated damage Jersey Coast \$122,746,000.00
 932 homes washed away
 3686 homes sustained major damage
 14 persons lost lives.

City of Wildwood Report written by Winfield Ingles, Chief of Wildwood Police
 On or about 9:55pm, Monday, March 5th, 1962, this agency received an informational originating from the United States Weather Bureau, Atlantic City, NJ stating "As of 9:30pm gale warnings are displayed. NE winds up to 35 to 45 knots per hour. Tides will run higher tomorrow." Other sources of weather news media reflected a drop in temperature with the forecast of snow. Best sources of information depicted that two low pressure systems were moving into the general area; one from the Midwest and the other moving from the Southwest. Preparations were made for snow, however, the precipitation continued as rain.

Early Tuesday morning, March 6th, 1962, Mr. Albert Neill, Civilian Defense Director, appeared at headquarters and as the various needs developed, expeditiously arranged for additional equipment, inclusive of mobile units from the National Guard, designating Wildwood High School and the Recreation Center as evacuation centers.

As the hours of Tuesday, March 6th, 1962 advanced, areas not normally subject to flooding were noted, causing an acceleration in the frequency of "Called for Services." This agency shared the responsibility of rendering aid, in its numerous forms, to the residents of the Borough of West Wildwood.

It is further noted that as the flooding continued with increased winds, numerous simultaneous fires were reported.

Although no tabulation was made, many residents who were forced to move from their homes were moved to homes of friends or relatives or evacuation centers. Approximately 8000 phone calls were received during the 3 1/2 day period. A power failure during the evening hours of Tuesday, March 6th, 1962 further caused complications.

~The full report can be read at the Wildwood Historical Museum



Aftermath of the storm.



Memories... as seen through the Craven's front window at 104 W. 17th
 by Scott Jett

Giles (Bud) Craven was the North Wildwood Fire Chief at the time. And like every other fireman at the time, he spent 3 days and nights working around the clock. His wife Pat took this photo of the firehouse boat parked in front of their home, in which her husband used to go back and forth to the 15th St. firehouse in. The photo below noted her neighbor "Kelly" on his way home from work. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCOTT JETT{WHO HADN'T BEEN BORN YET}



Memories of a NJ Bell Employee by Phyllis Bilotti Bethel

Phyllis recieved a phone call from her work, the NJ Bell Phone Company on Pacific Ave. in Wildwood, on the morning of March 6th, 1962. She was told to pack a few days worth of clothes to bring with her to work that day. One of her most vivid memories are the cinders flying outside the window from various fires in town and most of them were probably coming from the Nesbitt's furniture store fire.



NJ BELL Get Together: (Table L-R) Mary Lou Mattera, Kathleen Alexander, Phyllis Bilotti Bethel, Fran Botzenhart, Marie Patrizi, Rose Cologero Montefusco, (Standing) Bunny Viall, Mary Taylor



"Bless the beast and the children; give them shelter from the storm. Keep them safe, keep them warm." ~Karen Carpenter

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62

Shelter From the Storm

by LouAnn Catanoso

There are more than a few moments from my early childhood that have left a mark on my memory. I can remember watching little 'Shirley Temple', (one of my favorite actresses), tap dancing with the great 'Bill Robinson'. I have a modest collection of her black and white movies, and a few dolls.

I can also still hear the sound of 'Santa and his reindeer' landing on the roof of our house Christmas evening. (Really!!) But, one of my most vivid memories is the one that I have of watching rowboats go past my house during the flood of '62.

I woke up a little confused on the morning of March 7th, 1962. Somehow I could just tell that I had overslept and missed school. I grew up in a three story home; the bedrooms being on the third floor. My house was located at 19th and New Jersey Ave. When I went downstairs I noticed my family (minus my dad) staring out of our dining room window which faced New Jersey Ave. When I joined everyone in looking out the window, my confusion only grew more intense. The street was completely submerged under moving water. I climbed up on the radiator (which was cold) and watched in amazement.

My mom stood by in silence holding my baby brother, Billy, on her hip. (She gave birth to Brother Joe, #6, 12 days later.) I can't imagine why I didn't hear the fire whistle blow at 6:30am that morning. Perhaps it was because I was immune to the sound. My dad was a volunteer fireman, and we were accustomed to him running out of the house at all hours of the day and night.

So, on this infamous morning, my dad and the other fireman were already out of their own homes, putting out fires and rescuing people from their flooded homes. All I knew, was it meant 'a day off from school.' The tide receded a bit during the day, but rose again by 6pm that evening. We had two apartments on the ground floor of our home which had three feet of water in them. The tenants that lived in them joined my family and I for the next few days, along with many other people that had been rescued from their cold, flooded homes. We were fortunate enough to have a huge wood burning fireplace in our living room. We had cots set up all over,



Charlie Catanoso's family home at 102 E. 19th.

and I can remember seeing faces in the glow of the fire. Everyone was grateful and calm. My mom went above and beyond the call of duty, making sure we all had plenty to eat.

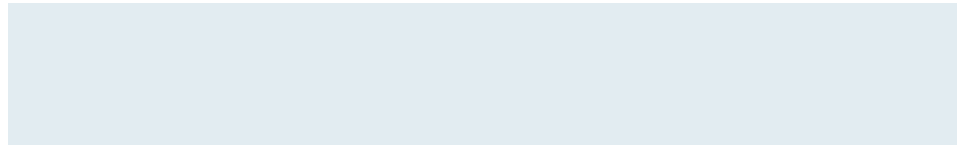
Being just 7 years old myself, I just thought it was kind of an 'exciting adventure'. Only later on, when I got older, would I come to understand the seriousness of it all, and learn of all the heroics and good will that took place during those few days.

People were rescued from their homes in army trucks; and some people who were on foot were rescued in boats. The North Wildwood firehouse was a safe haven for many people, and the ladies auxiliary made sure they all had hot meals.

Recently when going over these memories with my mother, she reminded me of how when one of us kids would need to use the bathroom on the third floor, we would 'all' follow her up the stairs as she led the way with a flashlight.

I can only take positive things away from this whole experience. Of course I'm only speaking from my perspective, but as far as I know, no one was seriously injured during those few days in our little town. I only saw the goodness and selflessness in people in a time of trouble. Funny how things are seen differently through the eyes of a child.

Dedication: This story is dedicated to the memory of Mother Teresa; one of my lifelong heroes who devoted her entire life to helping the unfortunate in the world.



North Wildwood Firehouse at 15th & Central Aves. The calm before the storm



The calm after the storm ~ Louise Catanoso with baby Joe who was born 2 weeks after the storm.



1962 Storm - Fire apparatus enroute to fight the blaze at 18th Avenue and Ottens Canal. Fire truck with its wheels completely covered by water has been abandoned by firemen at 17th and Delaware Avenues.

An abandoned firetruck at 17th & Delaware on its way to fight a fire at 18th & the canal



Two homes were destroyed by fire on Otton's Canal on the morning of March 6, 1962. Firemen were forced to battle the flames from rowboats with portable equipment.



"I believe in the sun even if it isn't shining. I believe in love even when I am alone. I believe in God even when He is silent." ~Anon.

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62



One Way to Remove 3 Feet of Sand!

Memories of the Storm of '62 from an older interview with Pop & Connie by Dorothy Kulisek

In the early 1960's, Ed (aka "POP") and Connie Redding opened a rooming house at Magnolia & the Boardwalk called "Connie's Rooms for \$3. a Night." During an interview I did with them back in 2004, they recalled the Storm of '62 that left the bottom floor apartments filled with three feet of sand. Soon after, a group of college kids came looking for a summer place and Ed and Connie showed them the bottom floor. They proposed to the students that if they could remove the sand they could have the apartment for the summer for free. The students seized the opportunity, turning it into a fun project. Not only did they remove all 3 feet of sand, but they offered to paint the rooms! "The one was purple and the others," Connie smiled, "had each wall painted a different color. Oh, how I loved my summer kids!" She said, "They were like our own. We always had the kitchen open, and I would iron their work uniforms if they needed, or sew something for them. I cried every year when Labor Day came because I hated to see them go."



The corner of Magnolia & Pacific Ave., old St. Ann's Church

... Another Way to Remove the Sand

Photos below submitted by Margaret Wade McAteer of her parents' Starfire Motel located at Leaming & Ocean Aves. where a double occupancy room could be reserved for as little as \$8 per night (according to its brochure!). If you booked it on a Thursday night, you would even get a free family barbecue included in that price! Allan & Doris Wade built their motel in 1960 and owned and operated it until 1980. It is still in operation today.

Doris Wade writes... at the Starfire we had several feet of mud in the pool, parking area, and covering the office steps and in front of the units. We had to hire a front-end loader for a couple of days in order to scrape it all up, then hose it all down...a nightmare!!! We had many water leaks in the units as well. Debris from other buildings and homes scattered every which way. Hopefully we will never see the likes of that type of storm again. I will add, that when we were warned to evacuate the island during last August's Hurricane Irene, I did not hesitate to move my family out of here. I've lived through many Wildwood storms in my 85yrs on this island, that was only the second time we had to evacuate.





"Any proverbs about weather are doubly true during a storm." ~Terri Guillemets

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62

Memories of an Anglesea Firefighter by Reds Van Note

When North Wildwood resident, Reds Van Note thinks back 50 years ago, he recalls 3 days of rescues while working at the Anglesea Firehouse. While Reds was out on duty, Mayor Catanoso promised to help transport Reds' expectant wife Tootie (Jean) to the hospital, in the event she went into labor. He can still envision oil tanks and boats floating down every street. He will never forget the helpless feeling he had while watching Bob McCullion's family's house, (located on Pine Ave. behind Henry Js) burn to the ground after a telephone pole fell on their home. The firefighters could see the flames from the firehouse, but were unable to get through the 4-5 feet of water in the streets. (Jeannie Van Note was born April 1st, 1962, just 3 weeks after the storm)

PHOTOS BELOW FROM REDS VAN NOTE COLLECTION



The Park Grill floated from 26th to Magnolia & Park Blvd.



A crew of workers at Magnolia & Park Blvd. after the storm



Photo inside Park Grill circa 1952
L-R, John "Porky" Carlson, Teki, Magnus Ekstrom, Ev, Harry and Big J.

Thank you Wildwood Historical Society and all those who contributed their memories and photos from 50 years ago on March 6-7-8, 1962.

Below photos from the collection of Bill Callahan



The motel that once stood where the Bal Harbor is today at Stanton Ave. in Wildwood Crest. The Callahan family built the Saratoga Inn soon after the storm, one block up from here on Farragut.



Looking north on NJ Ave. by Sunset Lake in Wildwood Crest



"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace, be still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." ~Mark 4:39

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62

Dear Friends:

*The storm was over -
Wreckage was left.
West Wildwood indeed
Was a place bereft.*

*Then into our area
Came help from outside
Rescuing those who'd
Been caught in the tide.*

*Workers came to help us
Remove the debris.
Food, clothing, and money
Poured in here to me.*

*I want to say "thank you"
To each thoughtful one,
But to write each a note -
Why, I'd never get done!*

*To express our gratitude
The right words I can't say.
Help in disaster
One can never repay.*

*But "thank you" and
"Thank You"
For every kind deed
That was given West Wildwood
IN HER GREAT HOUR OF NEED.*

Gratefully,
Va. Kavanaugh
For the Boro of West Wildwood

**"I can see clearly now that
the rain is gone,
I can see all obstacles
in my way.
Gone are the dark clouds
that had me blind,
it's gonna be a bright,
bright sun shining day."
- Johnny Nash**



Aerial view of the storm damage over West Wildwood

When the ocean met the bay... by Al Love

I was away in the Army in 1961, but I recall my father was not permitted down to check on our house for almost a week after the storm. Our house on W. Glenwood Ave. is 4 steps up from the sidewalk. The ocean had met the bay and the water mark inside our house was over 4 inches. We had to replace mostly everything. Our electric wiring was also ruined. There was sea debris all over our yard and front porch. One positive thing for me was a rowboat drifted into our driveway and was stranded there. We left it on our front lawn thinking someone would see it and claim it. After four weeks it still sat there. Finally I dragged it down to the bay and tied it up to a pier. I used it for 3 summers and rowed it around the island of West Wildwood. It was my only boat. In 1963, when I was on the Wildwood PD, I heard the guys talking about the storm. They were helping the citizens in West Wildwood evacuate their homes. Two officers, (I believe it was officers W. Ostrander and D. Romeo,) got stranded there with a senior couple during the height of the storm. They were on the second floor of the home and the National Guard truck could not get back to them. All night they watched the homes in West Wildwood floating down the streets and into the bay. They survived it, but it had to be a nightmare. That is why almost all the homes there now sit high off the ground. That Nor'Eastern storm was the worst to hit the Wildwoods in history I believe.



Joe & Joe Russo

Certain images from the great storm of March 1962 that were deposited in my memory bank remain indelible to this day. I recall standing at the back door of our house on Rambler Road and watching the water cross Atlantic Avenue and playing in a sand pit with my sister and cousins amidst the wreckage of the Gingham Club. But the most enduring memories are those of my father, one of the many who dealt with the ferocious uppercut delivered by Mother Nature with courage, aplomb, and a steadfast determination. His actions during the storm and the days afterward impressed me then and they still do today.

This is his story:

"On the first day, the water rose up to four feet and then receded," he recalled when I asked him about the storm recently. "We cleaned up and opened the restaurant at five o'clock. We had one customer. Catherine Furio came in for dinner. Then the tide started to rise again for the second time. I said to Catherine, 'You'd better put your feet up.' Then we got four more feet of water. We heard a horn blowing and couldn't figure out where it was coming from. It turned out that it was my mother's Cadillac. It was under water in the garage behind the kitchen.

"There was a fire boat full of firefighters that came up Davis Avenue and turned up Park Boulevard right into the northeast wind. They started to go backwards and they yelled over to us and threw us a rope to help them keep from drifting away. You remember Uncle Jamie's shop was right behind the restaurant?" "Yes," I said.

"We were building some boats for a jungle land ride up at Palisades Park; eight of them in all. They ended up in a pile at the intersection of Artic and Cresse."

"Tell me about West Wildwood."

"Your cousin Bill Thompson was dating Sue Wanninger at the time and she lived over there. She had called him and asked, 'Can you come and get us?' I had the dinghy from our sail boat in the back yard. We loaded it into my convertible and drove over to the West Wildwood Bridge.

"How were you able to get there?" I asked. "New Jersey Avenue and Central Avenue were dry because they were built up high

My Father and the '62 Flood

by Joe Russo

for the railroad bed. The fire company was blocking the bridge, so we put the dinghy in the water and rowed over to Sue's house. We got Sue, her mother, and two sisters out. Her father Nick, who was the mayor of West Wildwood back then, said he was staying at the house. All he wanted was for me to go get him a pack of cigarettes. Later on, when we got back home, Nick called me. 'You'd better come back,' he said, 'my house is moving!' Bob Hentges told me that West Wildwood lost one hundred houses. They had to raise the bridges to let them pass through. Three of them wound up in Sunset Lake."

"I remember that!" I said. "One of them sat on the point by the inland waterway for years."

"That's right," said Dad.

"A lot of places burned, didn't they?" I asked.

"The fires were horrible," he replied, his face sagging. "From my mother's back porch it looked like the whole town was on fire. They lost two whole blocks on New Jersey Avenue where the bowling alley is."

The one story that I wanted to hear, the one that I saved for last, was the story of how he got his business back on its feet.

"What about the bar?" I asked.

"During the storm customers still came in to drink. They sat on the bar with their feet hanging in the water while bottles floated by. We closed the bar for a week so we could move it out of the dining room and into the liquor store. The ABC came in and took every bottle in the place, even the ones that were up high. They took them over to the old city dump and ran over them with a tractor. "We set up a bar using plywood sheets set over half kegs on a dirt floor. The seats were planks on top of cinder blocks. Uncle Jamie even built a makeshift restroom out of plywood and curtains in the dining room."

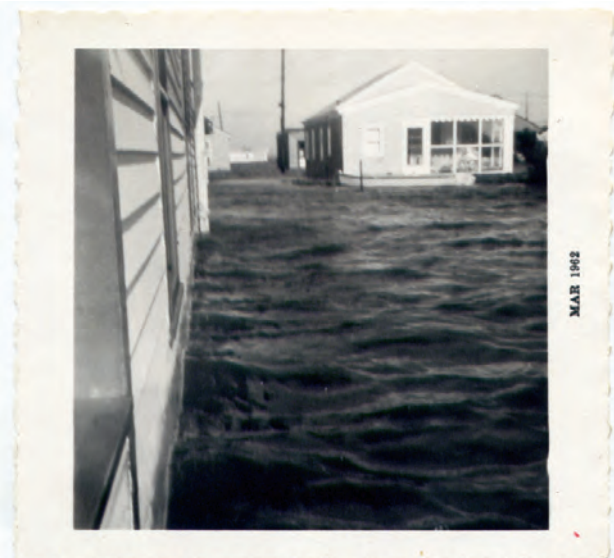
"I went to see the Coombs brothers, George and Kenny, who owned Sellright Beverage. I asked them to front me some product to get started and they gave me five hundred dollars' worth of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer plus some other stuff. 'Pay us at the end of the summer, when you have money,' they said. We put the beer in coolers and opened up.

"Well, at the end of the summer, I went over to settle up with them and they said, 'Don't worry about it.' They forgave the loan. I was so overwhelmed that I cried all the way home. And that is why I remained loyal to them and Pabst beer all of those years. I never forgot. That is something that people don't do anymore."



"Tomorrow may rain so I'll follow the Sun." -The Beatles

50 Years Later... WE REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62



Looking out of their windows, all that could be seen for 3 days was the bay.



Looking south from the Garrison's front door during low tide. The storm surge lasted for 5 high tides. Water did not recede until the 4th day.



Nothing in the house was salvageable after the storm

We Lived Through the Storm of the Century- One Family's Account of the March '62 Storm By Louise Garrison

The night the March Storm hit we went to a Wildwood High basketball game at Southern Regional High. Coming home that night the winds were high on Delsea Drive even in Cumberland County. Little did we know in a few hours Wildwood would be hit by The Storm of the Century.

The next morning we were awakened by voices calling my name. It was 7:30 am on March 6th. I went to my door to see my neighbors waist high in water. There were four of them. They lived in a house on Q. Avenue in West Wildwood. It was a rancher, which was the latest style of home at that time. The only bad thing about this beautiful modern home was it was built right on the ground. All that was visible a few hours later was the peak of the roof.

We had nine people, a dog, and a canary stranded for three days in our house. Tuesday was the worst part of the storm-rain-wind-tide. Tuesday night high tide we had eight feet of water in our living room.

When the tide went down about midnight we went downstairs to light the wood stove to warm up. The water had receded to about two feet. We sat in the living room with water around the chairs bundled up in heavy clothes and blankets. The wind was about 90 miles per hour. The electric pole down the corner was sparking. We were praying the wind would not cause a fire that would spread to our house. The tide came back in and all nine of us went back up to the dormer attic which was furnished with two full size double beds and one single feather bed. We all huddled together fully clothed wrapped in old fashioned comforters.

Come Wednesday morning we went downstairs to retrieve what nonperishable food we could. We prepared cereal and tuna fish sandwiches for nourishment. We had to feed three children and six adults, one of which was eight months pregnant.

We were rescued at four o'clock Thursday afternoon by an amphibious boat. They took us to the Wildwood Recreation Center on Rio Grande Avenue which was the shelter. The shelter was crowded so my husband and his buddy Richard Crawford went out to make other arrangements. We ended up in Rio Grande at Tomlins Farm. They had a few cabins. They took in several flood victims. Nine people in three rooms, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a bathroom. We stayed a few days and from there we ended up in Wildwood Crest. We rented a house Dot Kroman owned and stayed until after Easter.

Every day I would take the 5 Mile Beach Bus to Glenwood Avenue with empty suit cases and cleaning supplies to clean out our house in West Wildwood while Woody worked driving a Red Top Cab. I walked from Glenwood and Pacific Avenue to 210 Avenue P West Wildwood for two weeks. Cleaning three inches of bay mud off our floors.

I opened the front door and back door and poured pine oil on the floor and hosed the mud and sand out the back



The Crawfords in the Garrison's West Wildwood home. Note several inches of water on the floor.

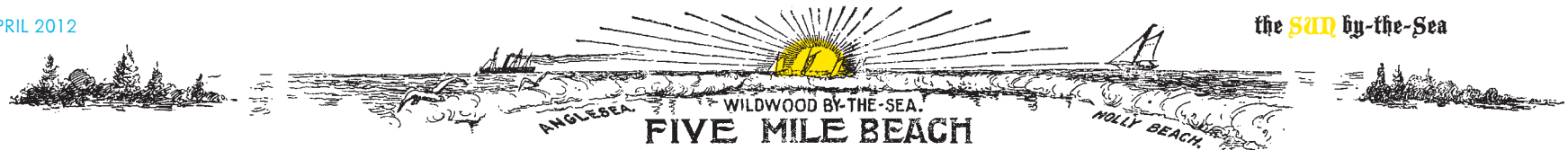


Richard Crawford in the Garrison's West Wildwood home. Note water level and piano in background.

door. Chopped up the furniture including an old player piano and put it out on the curb for trash pick up. After refurnishing and painting we finally returned before Memorial Day. We went through a lot, but when I saw all the devastation in West Wildwood and the other towns I was just thanking God we all made it out alive. It made us all stronger.

They haven't seen anything like that since and with the grace of God they never will.

FOOTNOTE: The Red Cross paid for our rent when we were relocated as well as for paint, furniture, flooring, and food. Even a pair of shoes for my daughter Deborah. After we were evacuated we discovered she didn't have any shoes on inside her boots. Everything was paid by vouchers. ~The Garrison family, Woody, Louise, Deborah, and Maryann



"Even on cloudy days the sun waits to break through." ~Anon.

Three Sisters Remember the Great 1962 Nor'easter

The Storm of 1962 came as a big surprise to everyone, especially to the Newell family and their three little girls. At that time we lived in Wildwood in a second floor apartment on Juniper Avenue, very close to Park Boulevard. There were five Newells in 1962; Dad (Paul), Mom (Joan), Donna (10), Paula (8), and Anna Marie (5). Our young mother of twenty-nine years had to have gallbladder surgery at Mercy Hospital in Sea Isle City just a few days before the storm. But she had an urge to go home the day before the storm, and reluctantly her doctor allowed her to leave. That turned out to be a good thing. Had she stayed, she would have been evacuated from the hospital with the rest of the staff and patients during the storm!

The rain poured down from a darkened sky on that day on March 7, 1962. As the tides rose and the wind pushed them in even further, the flooding began. Dad decided to move his 57' Chevy to New York Avenue thinking it would be safe from the water. No deal, New York Avenue along with Dad's Chevy ended up being completely submerged.

As the storm raged, water began to surround our apartment building. Dad put on his knee high boots to check on the Hipple's, an elderly couple who lived on the first floor below us. Our landlady Mrs. Morley, also on the first floor with her two daughters Kathy and Bea, called Dad to have him check out her water pipes. She was concerned the pipes had ruptured because water was coming through her floor boards. But Dad realized that it was sea water rising under the house, so he led the Morleys to our second floor apartment. With the water rising above the front porch, Dad and the Morleys (with Dad carrying their cat), had to balance themselves as they walked as quickly as they could across the porch railing! Once the Morleys were safely upstairs Dad rushed downstairs to get the Hipple's. By this time he had to use the rear steps outside the apartments. Using a screwdriver, he pried open the Hipple's bedroom window. As he crawled in through the window, he was surprised to see the Hipple's standing on their bed. Produce from the kitchen, like onions and potatoes, were floating along with much of the Hipple's furniture. Dad helped them get out of the window and onto the back steps where they made a hasty retreat to our second floor apartment. As the storm raged, seven adults, three little girls, and

one cat, not knowing what was going to happen to us, huddled together in our tiny two bedroom apartment.

By nightfall, with power gone, we lit candles for light. Oil tanks were spilling into the water and the sky was ablaze with fires from the oil being ignited. Nesbitt's Furniture Store had caught fire and was a flaming inferno lighting up the sky for miles. We all had a frightening feeling as we watched water lapping against windows in so many vacant summer homes. Oil slick, debris, and furniture was floating everywhere. Mom said, "I think it's the end of the world!"

Our apartment building shook and swayed under the relentless wind, rain, and seawater. A neighbor's outside shower stall was ripped up and blown into the air where it hit electric wires. It burst into flames and landed in our backyard. Donna, Paula, and I were so scared that, as we snuggled together on the bottom bunk bed, we fell asleep praying for God to save us.

By morning the rain had stopped and everything was calm. As we looked out from our second floor porch, it was as if we were in the middle of the bay. Mrs. Jones' porch was floating past us. A chair was sitting on that porch, and the porch stairs and screen door were still attached. Dad tried to add humor by making a lasso to catch the porch so he could use it to rescue us.

We were evacuated by the National Guard. I was thrilled to ride in a big Army truck. We were transported to the second floor of the Wildwood recreation center on Rio Grande Avenue where there were rooms for us. I remember the late Dr. Robert G. Salasin coming to examine Mom who was still recovering from her gallbladder surgery. Little did I know then that in fourteen years I would marry Dr. Salasin's youngest son, Jeffrey. Mom had to stay overnight at the recreation center. The rest of the family were picked up by our friends, Kenny and Linda Lee, who owned the Yellow Cab Service. They took us to stay in their home in Wildwood Crest until we were able to safely return to our home.

The three little girls, now Donna Davis, Paula Brennan, and Anna Marie Salasin, dedicate this story to our Dad, who we consider to be our hero. We love you, Dad!! XOXOXO

Also: Special thanks to Anita Hirsch for helping to write this story.



Susan Laird, Donna & Anna Marie Newell on Juniper St., before & after church, 1963



The Newells lived on the 2nd floor at 236 W. Juniper (above). Mrs. Jones' porch rested on the sidewalk after the storm.



A cottage that floated away



The Park Grill made landing on the corner of Magnolia & Park Blvd. Here it is shown being prepared to be moved back to its 26th St. location



Some houses completely collapsed during the great flood of 62.



Devastation can be evidenced in this photo of debris and eroded streets, taken near Otten's Harbor



"Every picture tells a story." ~Rod Stewart

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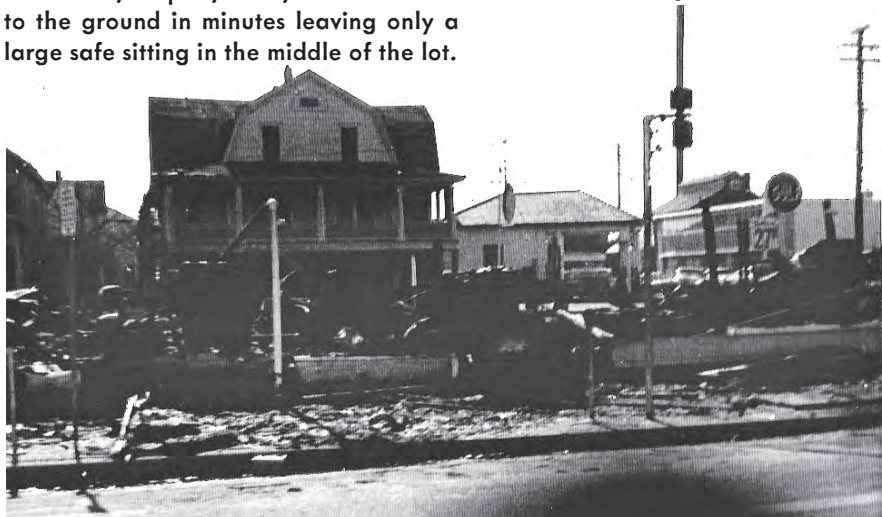
My Family's Furniture Store Fire During the Storm of '62

by Pat Nesbitt Nagel

At the time of the March 1962 storm, my parents owned Nesbitt's Furniture Store on the corner of Cedar & N.J. Aves. (now the 3Js bowling lanes). During the storm we were all safely at home in Wildwood Crest, where there were no signs of flooding. I was listening to the radio in my room when the announcer from WCMC broke through the music and told everyone that Nesbitt's was on fire. He said he could see the engines on NJ Avenue but the street was so flooded they couldn't get to the fire. I ran to the kitchen and told my parents the bad news. We later learned because it was a wooden building filled with flammable mattresses, carpets, sofas, etc. it burned to the ground in minutes leaving only a large safe sitting in the middle of the lot.



Nesbitt's Furniture Store on the corner of Cedar & NJ Aves., looking south



The ruins of Nesbitt's Furniture Store on the corner of Cedar & NJ Aves., looking south



The ruins of Nesbitt's Furniture Store, looking at Schellenger Ave.



The ruins of Nesbitt's Furniture Store, looking at Cedar Ave. Photo by Richard Dietz

My Family Storm of '62 Memories

by Lisa Lauriello Bukowski

...The bay is rolling down the Boulevard and the Ocean is coming to meet it!

My house on Taylor and Park Blvd. and had two giant concrete steps and a front porch with what seemed like a million jalousie windows. I remember my Uncle Freddie coming by and telling my Dad "Joe, the bay is rolling down the Boulevard and the Ocean is coming to meet it" and I thought what does that mean? I soon found out. The storm raged, the sky turned orange - there was a horrible fire in the middle of the storm - Nesbitt's Furniture burned down. . . and the water just kept coming, filling Park Blvd. like a giant pool. The chatter in the house was focused on what step the water reached. You see, we had a floor heater and even though it was March, it was cold and windy and we

feared losing our heat. It was frightening and fascinating at the same time. My father rescued our neighbors, they lived on the first floor and he found them huddled on top of their bed. He moved them to higher ground. Daylight brought the spoils of the storm - my brother Steven and I watched through the windows - we saw people's belongings floating by - we saw a neighbor "Willie, the Coke Man, Cardaci" rowing in a concrete mixer - I remember it like it was yesterday - I can still here the giant splash when the huge National Guard trucks went through the water. . . but mostly I remember that after the storm, all of my friend Roseann's dolls were blue, but we played with them anyway!!!



Many cars on the island were lost during the storm of '62 when the ocean met the bay. Photo courtesy of Wildwood Historical Museum



The ocean forced its way over the bulkhead at Hereford Inlet. From the collection of Woody Garrison Most people would recognize this location as right in front of the Greek Church

MAR 1962



"Take care of all your memories, for you cannot relive them." ~Bob Dylan

THE STORM OF '62



This photo was taken inside the Wildwood Leader newspaper office. There was no heat or light and the guys were perched above the water level. From left to right are John Haslem, Tom Kinnemand, Bob Penkethman, Bill Neill and Unknown.

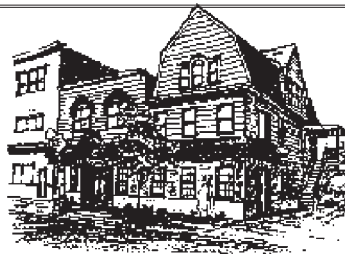


The first major fire to strike the area is shown in this photo as it consumed two homes at 18th and Otten's Canal in North Wildwood, on Tuesday morning on March 6, 1962. Firemen were forced to battle the flames from rowboats with portable equipment.



This photo was taken inside the Margaret Mace School in the lobby. Cots were set up in various facilities around the island to accommodate the people who were driven from their homes.

Photos above by Tom Kinnemand



Notes from Wildwood Historical Society
3907 Pacific Ave. in WILDWOOD 609-523-0277

Even though we have limited our "open" time at the museum, it doesn't mean we haven't been putting in time. Over the last few months, during our roof repair project, Board Members, Al Brannen and John Roat took one of the back rooms apart, made small repairs, painted over the old paneling, and replaced the ceiling tiles that were coming down from the leaks. They continue to explore the former "embalming room" (which is now our storage room) and are busy unearthing very interesting artifacts. Lorraine Roat (John's wife) was drafted in cleaning out one of our curio cabinets and she did an excellent job. Our own Phyllis Bethel spends countless hours going through files, sorting, arranging and cleaning out those cubby holes that were neglected for years. In addition, Chris Mento, one of the younger members of our Board, and also one of the more "cyber savvy", has set us up on FACEBOOK. How about Liking us on Facebook @ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wildwood-Historical-Society-George-F-Boyer-Museum/315971775102375>. Chris will try to keep everyone up-to-date on what's happening at the museum. Thank you ALL for all that you do for the museum!

A Koken barber chair was donated to the Wildwood Historical Society by the family of Robert and Irma McVey; children Diane McVey, David McVey and Linda Sterrett. The Koken barber chair is a vintage chair made during the 1800s and early 1900s. Al Brannen and John Roat are in the process of trying to get it refurbished. It is turning into a rather costly project. If there is anyone out there that can upholster in leather, and would like to donate their time to this project, it would be very much appreciated.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, June 16, 2012. We will be having our Annual Post Card Show and Open House at that time. Since it is the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, we expect to have a display of items from the motion picture "Titanic" including two original newspapers reporting the actual sinking of the ship. The



SPRING HOURS

MARCH~Saturday 9:00AM to 2:00PM
APRIL~ Thursday, Friday and Saturday 9:00AM to 2:00PM
Closed Sundays and National Holidays

display is made possible through the courtesy of Lew and Carolyn Vinci. We have asked our post card dealers to include any items they might have relating to the Titanic.

It is also the 50th anniversary of the 1962 Storm that ravaged this area. There are many of us that still remember the three days that saw people driven from their homes, the flooding and fires, destruction and loss of homes that were never covered by flood insurance at that time. There will be a photo collection of the aftermath for your perusal. Most of the photos are made available through Tom Kinnemand, retired local photog. Tom was working for the Wildwood Leader during the storm and many of his photos appeared in the Leader at that time. If anyone would like to share photos that they might have, I would be glad to scan and return them.

We have a file of 1960 property photos for the City of Wildwood and a 1982/83-property photo file for North Wildwood. While we may not have every property, we have most. If anyone is interested in seeing what their property looked like, we can do an 8 x 10 glossy of their property for \$10. Another of our Board members, Klaas Kramer has come up with the more elaborate idea of featuring what your property looked like in 1960, and the way it looks now. Very shortly this particular feature will be on FACEBOOK. Look for it there. The cost will be \$50 and will include "then and now" photos, properly framed. It would make a lovely gift for a parent or grandparent whose early years were spent on this island. People are asked to call the museum and see if the image of their property is available.

Another fund-raiser that we will be promoting is the sale of pavers for the sidewalk outside of the museum. The cost will be \$100 for a 4 x 8 paver and \$225 for an 8 x 8 paver. Any orders in by July 15, will be part of the fall installation. Mayor Ernie Troiano has promised to personally provide the labor to take up the concrete and install the pavers. We are very grateful for his contribution. We have forms on hand at the museum, or e-mail us at wildwoodhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com, and we will send one to you.

That concludes the activity at the museum. Again, we are open Saturdays only, until April 1, 2012. Stop in to see us and remember, life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift. See you all at the museum.

Until next time be happy and be well!

Anne Vinci,

PRESIDENT OF WILDWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

I REMEMBER THE STORM OF '62

Wildwood ~ March 6, 7, 8 1962 by George E. Anderson

The first day we got about 5 or 6 inches of water in our house. My parents, dog Duke & cats Topsy & Pierre left for my brother's house in Linwood. I decided to ride it out, not knowing what was to come. I didn't sleep much that night & the next morning another 18 to 20 inches of water greeted me. I was evacuated in late afternoon. I was taken to Wildwood High School where I was told there was no more room. I was then transported to Margaret Mace School where I spent the next 4 nights. When we were finally told that it was safe to leave, I started the long walk home to W. Montgomery Avenue. I was

amazed at the destruction, devastation & debris that I saw on every street. When I eventually reached our house, I didn't know what to expect. Several houses on my street had been moved off of their foundations. Fortunately our house was still standing. Once inside I was saddened, knowing that just about everything in there would have to be thrown out. Most of our belongings were ruined. However in the days, weeks & months that followed, we rebuilt as did many people on the island. That Nor'easter is one storm that I will never forget. It's been 50 years, but it is as clear in my mind as if it were yesterday.