

# STORM DAMAGE ON BERING SEA COAST

## Told by Eyewitness During Storm



**MODEST HOME HIT**—A small home near the beach sustained heavy damage from the sea storm.

We believe the results of the storm along the coast of the Seward Peninsula can be told best by the people who live and work there, and the following report was received from Martina Little, assistant administrator of Kawerak, Inc.

This is the Rural CAP regional corporation with an office in Nome headed by Robert W. Madden, who has been helping coordinate rescue efforts with other agencies.

Martina started working for Rural CAP as a Head Start teacher-director in St. Michael, was hired in 1971 as an assistant field training supervisor for the Kotzebue area, and eventually was hired in her present position by the Kawerak Board of Directors who represent the 18 villages in that region.

Martina's report follows:

Friday I flew out to Stebbins, St. Michael, and Unalakleet with Lawrence Davis, our newly-elected representative, Mr. Anderson, Red Cross representative, and Mr. Maguire, Senator Gravel's representative to evaluate the extent of the flood damage and see what assistance we could provide the flood victims.

I am happy to report that Stebbins and St. Michael, through the mercy of God, suffered very little damage if any. There were bulk storage fuel tanks behind the ANICA store in Stebbins that were in three feet of water.

The manager was doing all he could to get these tanks operable. He had managed to get the hose out and was trying to get the gravity level back to normal. A couple of boats belonging to individuals had gotten lost in the storm and these people talked to the Red Cross rep before we left.

A lot of people in Stebbins had heard a radio report (in fact no one couldn't have missed it because it was on KNOM) that bulk fuel storage plant in St. Michael was damaged by the storm. However, most of the people said if need be they would revert to wood stoves and use all the drift wood the storm had washed in.

The first thing that I noticed when we were landing in St. Michael was the bulk storage tanks were still intact and in fine shape and no one had to worry about running out of heating fuel.

We learned the water had gotten into one house and the Red Cross rep spoke to the owner and helped him fill out a purchase order form for linoleum to replace the one the storm had damaged.

The water had done a little damage to the Standard Oil warehouse, but the mayor was able to salvage most of the aviation gas, blazo and kerosene.

The oil products were insured therefore whatever oil products Standard Oil might have lost



**STORM DAMAGE AT UNALAKLEET**—This structure was heavily damaged at the village of Unalakleet. Despite considerable damage by the storm, people of the village were in good spirits.

during the storm does not present a problem.

The front street of Unalakleet was a sight to see. Had the water come another three feet the village would have been completely underwater. Ten houses belonging to individuals were either damaged somewhat or completely devastated.

The building that housed the Family and Children's Services and State Trooper were demolished. The local fish co-op building suffered extensive damage; the BIA and FAA area also suffered quite a bit of damage, mostly water damage.

The city council held an informal meeting while we were there and the Red Cross representative gave the mayor a go ahead to purchase essential clothing and food supplies for those people who suffered from the storm.

Either the city council would purchase the supplies or the people would do it themselves. In either case the Red Cross would reimburse the purchaser. The Red Cross rep indicated they would like to do as much local trading as possible and would go outside the village only if necessity called for it.

Fred Katchatag, the mayor, had obtained a \$20,000 from RDA for clean-up project.

In spite of all the problems the storm had caused, it was heartening to see all the people in good spirits.

Saturday I flew down to Shaktoolik. All of the 16 families in the old site lost their boats, motors, buoys, anchors and nets. A couple of families lost their tents and sleds. One of the fellows lost his rifle. The National Guard Armory lost 50 drums of stove oil.

Nine families live in the new site and their problem was conservation of energy; six of the families depend on electricity for their heating system. The "Front Street" of Shaktoolik was completely covered with debris, mainly driftwood.

The severe part of the storm managed to stay away from Shaktoolik and had they been hit with the kind of waves and flooding that Nome had Shak-

toolik might have been no more.

I was supposed to have gone to Koyuk, but my pilot informed me that Norton Sound Health Corp. had already done extensive study there the day before. The extent of the damage was three outhouses blown over.

We flew over to Golovin and while there I learned that regardless of the fact there had been no reports of flood damage a couple of people had lost their housing material. From the conversation I had with one of the people I learned that the foundation and the walls had been started and these drifted.

All the material had been ruined by water. Another lady's house had not yet been started on — construction wise — and all her housing material was lost. One of the fellows lost his tent. The fish plant was without electricity and heat needed to be in there or their materials would rot.

I was to have gone to Shishmaref on Sunday but the planes were tied up, and the one we were to take would have had to zig zag all over the country so we cancelled that trip.

In trying to get reports from the villages on Tuesday I had gone down to the National Guard Armory in Nome to see if I couldn't get them to help. While there I learned Teller had lost most of their fuel (if not all of it) and they were requesting 1,000 drums of stove oil and 1,000 drums of gas.

The State and Federal Disaster Agencies, Red Cross, Small Business Administration, Salvation Army had set up temporary Disaster Center in Nome and were set up temporary offices or centers up north and down south.

With the exception of three houses intact and livable all of King Island Village is totaled. Some of the families are staying with friends or relatives and for those who either have neither or cannot be put elsewhere they are now staying at the Beltz Dorm.

I will not get into the destruction of Nome itself. There should have been enough news material about that.