

## Quote of the Month:

"It was in the latter days of September, and the equinoctial gales had set in with exceptional violence. All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here in the heart of great, hand-made London we were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life, and to recognize the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilization, like untamed beasts in a cage.

As the evening drew in the storm grew louder and louder, and the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney."

John H. Watson, MD (Arthur Conan Doyle)  
In The Five Orange Pips

1. Meeting began at 11:30 am and adjourned at 1:30 pm.
2. Members present: Bergschneider, Breed, Cherington, Collier, Fischer, Hodge, Keen, Lammerste, Langford, Larson, Simmons, Yarnell
3. I distributed application and information forms that I had received from the International Tesla Society Inc. in Colorado Springs. They are sponsoring a meeting in July 1995.

I reported that Rich Kithil and Michael Foley called to tell me that they could not attend this meeting. Both of them have been working to move our group towards a financially stable organization with proactive missions and projects including the development of seminar programs. Michael Foley has written to Mark Ebel of Holland & Hart to facilitate the development of LDC Bylaws. These are important matters which we will discuss next month when both Rich and Michael are here. We shall also need to have these matters reviewed by hospital personnel.

Finally, I raised for discussion the matter of patient confidentiality and the LDC. I pointed out the importance of patient confidentiality during our deliberations. Hospital personnel or physicians taking care of a patient will describe clinical matters but use only generic information and not identify the patient by name. All members of the LDC should be sensitive to this matter. We, of course, need to collect data on lightning casualties and to discuss the complications of lightning injuries. None of us should identify patients by name to anyone without the patient's authorization. George Hodge, Dan Lammertse, and Phil Yarnell supported these sentiments. George stated that these ideas also apply to EMT members of the Fire Department. Dan pointed out that these same restraints apply to patients who are celebrities as well as members of the public. All members present were unanimous in protecting patient confidentiality.

4. Ron Larson made a correction from last months minutes. He stated that 12 lightning deaths all happened in one house during a single lightning strike during his visit to Zimbabwe. Another 9 people in the house were injured.
5. Dan Breed reported that his work at NCAR utilizing sail planes equipped with radar equipment will soon be flying on a full schedule.

Dan reported that Coors Field, the baseball home of the Colorado Rockies is surrounded by "early streamer" type of air terminals which are installed on all light structures.

Ken Langford reminded us that each step of the stepped leader "sees" a vicinity of 50 to 100 yards. If that is the case, players in the center of the field might not be protected by the early streamers on the periphery of the field.

6. Phil Yarnell spoke about out of hospital post cardiac arrest. He has reported in an article in the journal, Stroke (1976) co-authored with Mike Earnest that if the comatose patient shows no movement, the prognosis is extremely poor (death or persistent vegetative state). I asked Phil what he thought of articles in the medical literature which implies or even asserts that post lightning strike comatose patients may have a better prognosis. Phil believes, based on our experience in Colorado, there is no difference between these two categories of out of hospital post cardiac arrest. As an example, he mentioned the following case:

Phil reported that he spoke via the phone with a physician from Ohio who was caring for a 14 year old female patient who was struck by lightning while she was standing near a tree. The patient was unconscious after 2 days in spite of resuscitation efforts.

7. Richard Keen reminded the group to submit their chapter subjects for our upcoming book. Richard wrote a column in the Coal Creek Canyon Mountain Messenger (June 95). He contends that our cold, rainy spring can be attributed to El Nino. Richard believes we are on the verge of seeing a return of our sunny Colorado weather. The lightning season has begun. Normally the data shows a slight dip in lightning strikes in June before large numbers in July and August.
8. George Hodge was able to capture on film a tornado near Stanley Lake (South and East of Rocky Flats). He showed these dramatic pictures.

George reported in detail the findings in a house in Niwat which was damaged in a lightning strike. Lightning entered via the chimney flue and tried to find a path to ground. The current travelled through the entire electrical and ventilation

systems trying to find ground. Plumbing was also damaged causing water leaks. George found much evidence in the house reminiscent of a gas explosion. The television set was thrown 10 feet across the room. Electrical outlets were blown out of the walls. George showed us remarkable pictures of this damage. The only occupant of the house was in the basement and was not injured. This strike occurred on June 2 at 4 pm.

George commented that the soil conditions may have been a factor if the soil was not conductive. He pointed out that the National Safety Code requires that there be a ten foot ground rod. George met with the community to talk with them about the effects of lightning and about lightning protection.

9. Warren Simmons and Kevin Bergscheider reported that the US Open Woman's Golf Tournament will be held this summer at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. Warren is on the Rules Committee. Both Warren and Kevin believe this might be an opportunity to increase awareness about lightning safety.
10. Ken Langford reminded us that the "Cone of Protection" does not always apply. For example, the Empire State Building has been struck on the side of the building -- from a horizontal lightning strike.  
Ken recently spoke to an Outward Bound group about lightning safety. He has also been actively trying to solve a long unanswered question about the circumstances of the picture of two people with the hair standing on end. This picture is known to most of us and has been seen by many people. Ken has learned that the picture was taken in Sequoia National Park on August 20, 1975. The photographer was injured. A bystander was killed. The setting was near a rock named, Moro Rock. That rock now is marked with a warning sign.
11. Next meeting: Friday, July 14, 1995 at 11:30 am in Conference Room B at St. Anthony Hospital Central.

Respectfully submitted:



Michael Cherington, MD

---