

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER  
NOVEMBER 8, 2002  
MINUTES  
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL

Quote of the Month:

"Franklin's kite and lightning rod experiments made him even more famous in Europe than at home. With lightning rods, people would no longer need to hide all steel objects in drawers to keep their houses from burning down since the electricity would be let into ground. He had published instructions for constructing the rods in his Poor Richard's Almanac in 1753, and they became such a fad among European ladies that they wore them on their hats, trailing a ground wire." This is page 37 from the book Michael Faraday and the Dynamo by Mabel Miller.

The meeting began at 11:30 A.M.

Members present: Baumgartner, Boyle, Bradley, Burrows, Felsenberg, Foley, Henke, Keen, Kozak, Maas, Maher, McDonough, Olson, Paton, Ross, Russon, Staelin, Stewart, Weide, Wachtel, and Yarnell.

\* On the round table discussion, I presented the case of a teenager struck, with a group of four other kids, standing on a sand dune in North Carolina during a thunderstorm, barefooted in the rain. There was one fatality, a girl who was struck in the head. Her two friends, who were leaning against her, both suffered ruptured eardrums. All the children were knocked to the ground. The patient suffered an entrance wound in the tongue and an exit wound in the foot, with discoloration of the foot; urinary tract bleeding; and has been bothered by leg problems. The leg symptomatic is the one that was involved in the lightning strike which has been discolored at the time.

I noted this was a case of lightning striking a group, again with one fatality out of the group, and questioned the relationship of the lightning strike to the vulnerable period of the cardiac cycle. Kidney and leg infection problems plus mood swings, depression and sleep disturbance are ongoing issues at 3 months.

\* One of our members had attended the Lightning Detection Conference in Tucson in October of 2002 and may volunteer to give a summary of the latest lightning detection information presented at the conference later.

\* I also brought up the point that a representative from Cyberonix had visited my office to discuss vagal nerve stimulation as treatment for epilepsy, and I had invited them to come and give a short presentation on that topic in the future session, should they be interested.

\* The main featured discussion was about Nikola Tesla and the fascinating high-voltage coils or "lightning in a garage", presented masterfully by the duo of David Boyle and David Maas. Mr. Boyle first gave a historical discussion of Tesla and framed his

contribution in terms of the great growth of the electrical industry in the late 1800's/early 1900's. Then David Maas presented an excellently done video on the Tesla coils that they had constructed.

The presentation involved a short biography, a discussion of Tesla's inventions, and discussion of the Tesla coils' construction, variations and safe operation, and then the demonstration video, plus an open discussion at the end with show-and-tell/give-and-take.

David Maas then showed some uses of Tesla coils that were used for medical "quackery", a device called "The Master Violet Ray", which was a handheld Tesla coil that plugged in an outlet and used glass electrodes to treat various ailments. He then showed a Ford coil used for an ignition system for each cylinder before there was a distributor system, this was also an example of a Tesla coil used.

David Boyle and David Maas then said they would try and see if an actual demonstration of their Tesla coils could be arranged in a safe, non-hospital setting if the Lightning Data Center would be interested.

\* Howard Wachtel pointed out that in the video, a low level of current first had a slightly purplish glow before the actual spark discharges emanated from the coil and rekindled the interested in "invisible" lightning. Howard will be featured speaker in the upcoming meeting.

These minutes do not represent official positions of LDC. They reflect the comments of members present.

Our next meeting will be held at 11:30 A.M. in the Auditorium on Friday, December 13th, the speaker will be Howard Wachtel, Ph.D. from the University of Colorado.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Yarnell, MD