

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
MARCH 12, 2010
ST. ANTHONY CENTRAL HOSPITAL, DENVER, CO
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Monthly Quote: "Earthquakes have long been accompanied by the appearance of "bright, luminescent, multicoloured sky glows" ([Wagner](#), 1978) that can take place any time before, during, or after the seismological event." Sean B. Palmer. "Earthquake Lights"
On the web at: <http://inamidst.com/lights/earthquake>

1. Meeting began at 11:50 AM and adjourned at 1:10 PM.
2. Members present: Clark, Gift, Cui-Gift, Collier, Nibbe, Helen and Rich Keen, Collier, Mullan, Engle, and Wells. Clark moderated the meeting.
3. Clark brought three articles found on the internet: a [National Geographic](#) article about a new kind of volcanic lightning, an article from the British newspaper, [The Guardian](#), describing the lack of lightning storms over Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela due to drought, and a third article describing lightning damage to property in Fillmore, California.

The [National Geographic](#) article postulated a new kind of lightning long suspected in volcanic eruptions and recently confirmed on film during January 2009, when Mount Redoubt in Alaska, began to rumble prior to erupting in March 2009. The flashes are only about 3 feet long and last just milliseconds. Dr. Martin Uman doubts that this is a new kind of lightning, only because there is not a formal scientific definition of what a lightning discharge is. Dr. Uman did suggest the lightning seen during January 2009 is a potential precursor of volcanic activity and as such, could help save lives. Here's the link:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/02/100203-volcanoes-lightning/>

The article in [The Guardian](#) described the lack of Venezuela's famed Catatumbo lightning display over Lake Maracaibo, which is most likely attributed to a drought caused by El Nino. These lightning storms are said to last hours during the nighttime. The link takes you to eleven photographs and a link to the article.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/gallery/2010/mar/02/venezuela-venezuela?picture=359938246>

Lightning struck a palm tree in Fillmore, California, causing windows to be blown out and also causing damage to a block wall with rebar. The article stated "about 1 billion volts of electricity" was transferred to the ground from the strike. Rich Collier questioned the accuracy of the voltage estimate, since the atmospheric breakdown potential is approximately 3 million volts per meter. Here's the link: <http://www.vcstar.com/news/2010/feb/10/lightning-strike-shatters-windows-in-fillmore/>

4. With all the earthquake activity seen during the past month, Karen Wells wondered if anyone had witnessed the so-called “Earth Lights” prior to any of the quakes. Clark stated he was not aware of any such reports. Cui-Gift recalled in 1976, while she was living in China, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake occurred with an epicenter near Tangshan. She stated people recalled seeing a “ground light” flash, followed immediately by the quake.
5. Helen Keen recalled how she narrowly avoided being hit by lightning. She was on her knees inside the house and leaned out the back door to reach a nearby hailstone on the wet cement. When she put her hand on the cement, she felt a tingling sensation and instinctively fell back into the house. Immediately afterwards, lightning struck.
6. Wells asked if any speakers were scheduled. Clark stated no speakers have been lined up yet, and then asked those attending what topics they would like to hear about. Engle stated he wants to know more about the similarities and differences between those that are struck by lightning and those that are electrically shocked. Wells expressed curiosity about ball lightning and also about the “Earth Lights” associated with earthquakes. Collier wants to know more about ionospheric electricity and also about lightning and the human heart.
7. Engle mentioned his hair grows out curly since he was shocked and says prior to the shock, his hair grew out straight. He wonders if anyone else has reported a change in hair growth following a shock.
8. Rich Keen mentioned one of his neighbors had witnessed ball lightning. He saw a glow inside their woodstove and heard a pop, and then saw ashes being blown into the room.
9. These minutes do not represent official positions of LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting.
10. Next meeting: Friday, April 9, 2010 at 11:45 AM in Main Auditorium at St. Anthony Central Hospital. Subject: Right now, a “Lightning Show and Tell” is scheduled. If a speaker is found for April, then the speaker will be given priority. More information will be made available in Sue’s monthly announcement.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist