

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
February 13, 2015
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL WEST, LAKEWOOD, CO

Monthly Quote: "I live about a mile away and it sounded like a cannon went off." A local resident describing a lightning strike in the Venice Beach, California area. Los Angeles Times, July 27, 2014. On the web at: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lightning-strikes-storms-southern-california-20140727-story.html>

1. Meeting began at 11:55 AM and adjourned at 1:05 PM: Members Present: Clark, Swanson, Yarnell, Elder, Claus, Wells, Nibbe, Gift, Brown, Wachtel, Collier, Stewart, Bedow and Langford. Clark moderated the meeting.
2. From our colleagues at the Yahoo Lightning Safety Group: A lightning safety video from Environment Canada shows how lightning safety measures can be implemented during a soccer game. This video is one of several lightning safety videos issued by Environment Canada, and can be seen here: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudre-lightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=54B219E5-1>
3. The first International Symposium on Lightning and Storm Related Phenomena will be held in Aurillac, France on July 2 and 3, 2015. Topics for discussion are lightning and thunderstorm activity, thunderstorm prediction and modeling, ball lightning, lightning detection, and lightning injury. For more information, visit the symposium website at: <http://www.labofoudre.com/index.php/actualites/international-symposium>
4. Steve Clark presented an article about postmortem predation of lightning-strike animal carcasses. A giraffe was killed by lightning in South Africa and had lain on the ground for 5 days without being touched by vultures and hyenas, which is highly unusual for that area. An ammonia smell was initially reported near the carcass following the strike. The author, a forensic pathologist, suggests odors resulting from the lightning may have kept scavengers away. Other farmers in the area have reported similar episodes of delayed predation. Finally, the author noted this phenomenon has never been formally studied and merits further study.
5. Carl Swanson reported on his progress in pursuing lightning strike injury statistics from EMS first responders. It was suggested that EMS data can be compared to storm data to see if all incidents are being captured. Carl hopes to get 10-20 state agencies involved in data reporting. There was discussion on exactly what data should be sought and the mechanism by which it should be gathered. Phil Yarnell recommended contacting the burn unit at the University of Colorado Hospital to find out how many lightning strike patients they see.

There was discussion on whether the news media is effective at reporting lightning strike incidents. There was discussion about telltale methods for identifying lightning injury in cases where the cause of injury is uncertain. Phil said Lichtenberg Figures, or ferning, is the only "proof positive" of a strike.

6. Greg Stewart reported on two lightning incidents in aviation.

The first was a failure of hydraulic systems in an All Nippon Airways Boeing 767-300 following a lightning strike. The incident occurred on 1/15/15. A web search has failed to locate photos that are said to have appeared in Japanese media. Here is a link: <http://www.aeroinside.com/item/5211/ana-b763-near-nagoya-on-jan-15th-2015-lightning-strike-causes-hydraulic-failure>

The second occurred on January 26, 2015, and involved a Garuda Airlines Canadair flight in Indonesia, which had to divert due to a lightning strike. The aircraft received damage to the left-hand wing. "During examination of the aircraft, technicians found black smoke emanating from the left hand wing." Link: <http://www.aeroinside.com/item/5246/garuda-crjx-near-biak-on-jan-26th-2015-lightning-strike>.

7. Greg mentioned Florida's Severe Weather Awareness Week, which concluded on February 6. It was a lightning education initiative by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), with the goal of promoting preparedness by all Floridians for all types of weather hazards. FDEM and its partners hosted events at elementary schools across the state celebrating the winners of this year's Severe Weather Awareness Week poster contest. The first day's focus was lightning: "With an average of 1.4 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes each year, no other state in the country experiences more lightning strikes than Florida." Link: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/swaw/>

A book about the 30/30 Rule aimed at lower-elementary grade students was presented during the Florida campaign.

Link: http://www.floridadisaster.org/swaw/2015/documents/Weather%20Rack%20Cards/Thunder_Rack_Card-Monday.pdf, and the book is available for purchase for \$10 at: <http://www.kidsgetaplan.com/thirtyrule.php>. The teacher's guide is available for free here: http://www.kidsgetaplan.com/parent_teacher_guides/Grade_1_Guide_for_Teachers_and_Parents.pdf

8. Greg asked about scheduling for the 2015 International Conference on Lightning and Static Electricity (ICOLSE). The next conference, "Shining a Light on Lightning & Static Electricity, is scheduled for September 9-11, 2015 in Toulouse. The call for abstracts has proven successful with over 70 abstracts submitted. Link: [International Conference on Lightning & Static Electricity](#)

9. Greg also reported on two lightning strikes in Australia.

On January 31, 2015, a man died after being struck in Queensland, Australia. He was sheltering with his family in a park, under an awning. Paramedics attended to the man at the scene before he was taken to Gold Coast University Hospital in critical condition. After the strike, his 18 month-old son was unconscious and not breathing, but regained consciousness before being taken to the hospital. His wife and two children were reported in stable condition. "There's evidence of the shelter having taken a lightning strike." Link: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-31/man-dies-after-lightning-strikes-family-on-gold-coast/6059714>

On February 3, 2015, a Western Australia man in his late 50s, who was found dead on the footpath of a Perth suburb, was suspected of being struck by lightning. It was the second death by a lightning strike in Western Australia in the past 12 months. In May 2014, a 22 year-old German backpacker was struck and killed on a farm in the Wheatbelt. Link: [Perth man found dead on footpath 'was struck by lightning'](#)

10. During Carl's presentation, the LDC agreed the May 8, 2015 meeting should be an invitational for Colorado EMS and first responders, with the idea of creating a link between the LDC and the EMS community. The LDC executive committee will work with Carl on this.
11. Questions, comments, notification of errors, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please forward those to Steve Clark at: sclarktoto@gmail.com. Please keep your communications professional and respectful. Communications will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.
12. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of the LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not implicitly or explicitly recommend or endorse any product or service. Any service or product presented in these minutes is done so for purposes of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for the consideration and review by the entire membership.
13. Next meeting: Friday, March 13, 2015 at 11:45 AM at St. Anthony Hospital West. Conference Room TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist

In Case You Missed It...Lightning Links

This is a monthly listing of periodicals, websites, and videos about lightning and allied areas as reported in the media. A headline or description is listed, followed by the link. Please note that some of the links are perishable, which means you'll need to go to the source for the information. Enjoy!

Blumenthal, Ryan, "Delayed Post Mortem Predation in Lightning Strike Carcasses: Sense or Nonsense?" Vulture News, July 2014, Vol. 66, pp. 49-55.
