

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

March 12, 2021
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL
www.lightningdatacenter.org

Monthly Quote: “Thunder roars but does not strike. Lightning strikes but does not roar. Choose to be lightning.” – Matshona Dhliwayo. Link: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/lightning>

Members present: Yarnell, Terry, Crow, Swanson, Langford, Stemple, Wachtel and Clark.
Clark moderated. Meeting began at 11:45 AM and ended at 12:50 PM.

1. **VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ!** As of March 2021, we will continue to hold meetings via Zoom only through at least June. The number of COVID cases continues to fall since last month and the positivity rate is also decreasing. Distribution of the vaccine has improved but there is still concern over new strains of the virus. The hospital is using all of the conference rooms to vaccinate people resulting in meetings being displaced. I will keep you posted.
2. The LDC is accepting donations, either as cash or check. If you donate via check, please make your check payable to Steve Clark at 755 S. Clinton Street, #2A; Denver, CO 80247. He will cash the check and keep the cash holdings specifically for the LDC. When the LDC incurs expenses, Steve will pay for services rendered through his bank account using the cash from LDC’s cash holdings. A log will be maintained detailing the inflow and outflow of monies. At the present, the LDC has \$582.00 in cash.
3. The International Conference on Lightning and Static Electricity is being moved from September 2021 to June 2022 in Madrid, Spain. Specific dates are not yet available.

LS&ESSI 32nd Annual Conference

4. Four members from the LDC attended the 32nd Annual Lightning Strike & Electric Shock Survivors International (LS&ESSI) virtual conference on February 27: Dr. Phil Yarnell, Ken Langford, Barb Stemple and Steve Clark. Presentations were given by Jim Segnari, Dr. Phil Yarnell, Todd Heptinstall, Ken Langford, Chris White and Jim Segnari, to close. Here is some of what was said.

Jim Segnari opened by saying survivors need to take control of their recovery and figure out where to get help. Help comes in several forms. First and foremost is competent medical help. Get the right help for your malady or condition. Second, insurance advocates and ombudsmen are typically hired by the state and they help survivors navigate insurance issues and direct them to other sources of help. Third, attorneys will review a potential lawsuit and if it appears to be a case they can handle, they will proceed. Fourth, social workers connect people to resources and they often know of resources that others do not. Fifth, family, friends and faith are often the backbone against which survivors lean. Other sources of help include employee assistance programs, workers comp, Veteran’s Administration and the Internet. WARNING: The Internet can be a good source of information, but there is an awful lot of junk on the web. User beware!

Jim next gave some pointers on what survivors can do and should not do. Set goals and break recovery down into smaller bits. Take charge and make informed decisions. When visiting a doctor, ask how that test/procedure/scan/surgery will help. Survivors should not self-medicate.

LS&ESSI offers a forum for people to share experiences with others who can relate, which can be hard for survivors to find. LS&ESSI cannot refer people to doctors due to liability issues.

Towards the end of his talk, Jim presented the odds of various things happening to a child:

- Becoming a pilot, 1:2700
- Being struck by lightning, 1:12,000
- Being on a US Olympic team, 1:30,000
- Becoming a member of Congress, 1:636,000
- Becoming a billionaire, 1:766,000
- Odds of contracting sexually transmitted disease after a shot, higher odds still.

Dr. Phil Yarnell spoke about what a neurologist does and some of what is done to treat patients. First, the patient needs to tell the doctor what is bothering them. The doctor will try to figure out the symptoms and the location of the ailment. Some ailments are localized, eg: tumor or scarring, and others are diffuse, eg: low sodium or low sugar. Dr. Yarnell discussed two sets of neurological issues: neuropsychological and neurocognitive. Some complaints under the former include depression, withdrawal, loss of pleasure, loss of self-confidence, isolation, anxiety and temper control. Some complaints under the latter include problems with memory, multitasking, processing, planning, mental focus, attention span, learning, navigation and verbal expression.

A person with neuropsychological issues might say: "I'm not the same person anymore."
A person with neurocognitive issues might say: "I have brain fog."

Dr. Yarnell mentioned a few forms of treatment: therapy, mind-body exercise, yoga, drug therapies, sleep and pain management. He said symptoms are often diffuse and can be modulated, which requires a lot of effort on the part of the survivor. Finally, he said the neurologist should shepherd the patient through treatment while not over-medicating.

Todd Heptinstall gave an excellent talk on the many facets of caregiving. There are some positives to be gained. Caregivers have a sense of accomplishment and purpose, feel good about themselves, strengthen their relationships, feel valued and stay physically active. There are some negative aspects of caregiving. "Caregiver stress" occurs when a caregiver feels burned out, distressed or has compassion fatigue. Caregiver stress can devolve into "caregiver fatigue", which can reveal itself both emotionally and physically. Some emotional manifestations are: anxiety, depression, moodiness, road rage, memory issues and substance abuse. Some physical manifestations are: sleep disorder, pain, headache, indigestion, loss of weight, loss of hair, high blood pressure, skin disorder and weakened immune system.

When kids end up being caregivers, they average about 20 hours per week caregiving. They often sacrifice their education along with their physical and emotional well-being and are often isolated from friends and peers. On the positive side, they develop a deep meaning of family and generations within the family and they develop a "servant heart".

Next, Todd addressed how to manage the stress of caregiving. Know and accept what you can control and cannot control. Have an outlet – someone you can talk to and vent to. Know your limitations. Be realistic and set priorities. Planning and preparation are important. Learn about your loved one's health condition and the possible outcomes, both good and bad. When a loved one sees a doctor or is in the hospital, a caregiver can ask for tele-health or video connections from the provider. Plan for a crisis. Know people who can help. Tell them what's going on and delegate responsibilities. Be sure to incorporate matters of home (access, security, household tasks), work (paid time off, FMLA time, remote work) and school (attendance policy, remote learning) in your plan. Keep records of your loved one's personal information, medical information, doctor's lists, Power of Attorney(s) and a Living Will. Update that info quarterly.

Finally, Todd gave some additional tips on how caregivers can relieve their stress. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Take breaks. Stay active. Acknowledge your feelings and release your emotions. Say it! Breathe deep five times a session and do three sessions per day. Find humor.

Ken Langford presented some of his lightning photography, followed by a lunch break. After lunch, meteorologist Chris White gave a weather safety presentation for several kinds of weather hazards: thunderstorms, tornadoes, high winds, hail, hurricanes, wildfires, heat and drought. Jim Segnari concluded the day's presentations by presenting two short videos on PTSD.

Jim said the meeting was recorded and will be made available for viewing later.

Regular LDC Meeting Notes

5. The next annual conference of LS&ESSI will be held here in the Denver metropolitan area sometime in 2022. Barb Stemple offered a few suggestions.
 - Meet at a hotel rather than at the hospital – more kid friendly. Must be affordable.
 - Meet at a time when lightning is least prevalent.
 - After her discussion group of female survivors during the virtual meeting, she found most survivors were interested in the medical aspects of their injury and therefore suggested inviting specialists to present, such as a cardiologist and a nutritionist.

Carl Swanson expressed concern that COVID may still be an issue during summer 2022. Howard Wachtel suggested our conference might be held in conjunction with another allied conference. Phil Yarnell said LS&ESSI will hold one-day meetings which will be announced on their Facebook page. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/114266515272012>

6. Dr. Yarnell asked about the lightning plasma balls that respond as your hand goes near the glass sphere. Barb Stemple noted she had been affected by one of those when she was about 15 feet away from it and had not been looking at it. We wondered if other survivors would be similarly affected. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence suggesting survivors are more sensitive to their electrical environments post-event. Ken Langford suggested a simple test of blindfolding people and then seeing if they can sense when the plasma ball is activated.

7. Ken presented a video that was called to his attention by Mary Ann Cooper. In Gurugram, India, which is approximately 15 miles southwest of New Delhi, four men were standing underneath a tree that was hit by lightning. Three fell down right away and the fourth collapsed a little bit later. All four were taken to a hospital and one of them died later. Howard wondered if any of them had burn marks. If any of them did not, he said they may have been affected by an induced current caused by a rapid change in the magnetic field during the strike. A separate news article was found which indicated all four had severe burns. India has recently started a lightning safety campaign called “Lightning Resilient India Campaign 2019-2021”.
8. We are not quite done with the lightning safety brochure. We continue to make minor changes and we hope to start printing it later this month for the start of the 2021 thunderstorm season.
9. LDC welcomes your medical questions. Please send them via e-mail to Steve Clark at sclarktoto@gmail.com. Your medical questions will be forwarded to Dr. Phil Yarnell for his review and will usually be taken up for discussion in the next month’s meeting. Please be advised any questions posed are for the general consideration by the group and do not constitute a formal medical opinion. If a formal evaluation is requested, arrangements can be made directly with Dr. Yarnell. If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 or your local EMS.
10. Questions, comments, error notifications, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please forward those to Steve Clark. Please keep your communications professional and respectful. Communications will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.
11. 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 product or service 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.
12. Next meeting: Zoom meeting. Friday, April 9, 2021, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM MDT.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Lightning Links

This is a monthly listing of periodicals, websites, and videos about lightning and allied areas from a variety of sources. 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.

India Lightning Strike Video

Sky Lightning Sector 82 Gurugram Haryana India

Link: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwLswDnzTLLzMvRIDtwVBTfrCXv?projector=1>

India Lightning News Articles

Dhankhar, L., 2021: Lightning Strike Kills 1, Injures 3 in Gurugram Residential Township. *Hindustan Times*. March 13, 2021. Link: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/others/lightning-strike-injures-4-in-gurugram-residential-township-101615574260048.html>

Sharma, J., 2021: Lightning Strike in Gurugram Kills One, Injures Three – Video Caught on Camera. DNA. March 13, 2021. Link: <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-lightning-strike-in-gurugram-kills-one-injures-three-video-caught-on-camera-2880831>

Lightning Council – SW Monsoon 2019 Lightning Report. Link: <https://lightningcouncil.blogspot.com/2019/12/sw-monsoon-2019-lightning-report-unique.html>