

# LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

July 8, 2022

## *In Memoriam*



*Michael Cherington, MD*

*November 24, 1934 to June 25, 2022*

The Lightning Data Center lost one of its founding fathers. Michael Cherington passed away on June 25th surrounded by family in the comfort of his home. Late in his medical career, he saw his first lightning patient, a bicyclist who had been struck while riding in the Colorado mountains. He was so fascinated by the case that he wrote an article, which at first was rejected by many of the peer-reviewed journals, but was accepted in 1990 by *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*. After the article was published, two individuals, research meteorologist Ron Holle and electrical engineer Ron Larson, read the article and reached out to Dr. Cherington independently. The three met in January 1992 and decided the topic of lightning injury was worthy of discussion on a regular basis and so the Lightning Task Force was created, which later became the Lightning Data Center.

Michael's recall of cases was phenomenal. His recall of people, names, places and lightning strike incidents was truly astounding. Michael was cited in the Congressional Record by Congressman Ken Buck and U.S. Senator Cory Gardner in recognition of his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The passing of Dr. Cherington causes us great sadness. Our condolences go out to Nance Cherington and Michael's extended family. Next month's meeting will be a celebration of Dr. Cherington.

Michael's obituary and his Congressional Record citation may be read here:

<https://www.shalomfuneral.com/obituary/Michael-CheringtonMD>

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Monthly Quote: "There was the biggest flash like light bulbs right in your face." Sherrie Kelley, passenger in a boat struck by lightning 100 miles from Clearwater, Florida. From Fox 13 News.

Members present: Clark, Swanson, Stemple, Langford, Terry, Crow, Coomer and a survivor.  
Meeting began at 11:45 PM and ended at 12:45 PM.

1. 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. LDC currently has \$1182.00 in cash.
2. TRIP TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK – UPDATED. So far, there will be three of us going to Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP): Coleen Crow, Ken Langford and Steve Clark. We plan on going on Thursday, July 21, with Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> as a backup in case the Thursday date does not work out. If you are interested in joining us, you must make your reservation with Coleen by no later than 6 PM on Monday, July 18. Please contact Coleen at 719-237-0805 or via e-mail at [coleencrowcc@gmail.com](mailto:coleencrowcc@gmail.com) if you are interested.
3. Carl Swanson reported on his First Responder Data Collection Project. So far this season, Carl has not received any reports of lightning strikes in Colorado. In Tennessee, there have been 3 lightning injuries reported. All three were inside their homes when hit.

4. In last month's meeting, Dr. Phil Yarnell asked if electric shock survivors have the same heightened sensitivity to the electrical environment that some lightning survivors report. Carl posed that question to the LS&ESSI Facebook group. So far, three electric shock survivors confirm having this experience. All three of them claim to be more sensitive to approaching thunderstorms, even though they were not struck by lightning. Carl will leave the posting of the question on the Facebook page and monitor it for further responses.
5. A survivor who came to some of our meetings almost 10 years ago joined our meeting. The individual reports PTSD kicks in variably. Over the last few weeks, things have been a bit intense and the survivor has been looking for ways to connect. The survivor found a couple of Facebook pages, one of which is by LS&ESSI. Through that, Carl invited the survivor to join or meeting via Zoom.

The survivor mentioned a heightened sensitivity to thunderstorms, well before friends can see it. The survivor asked about safety in the home and was told to avoid plumbing and to avoid using corded electrical devices while the storm is in the area.

A few questions were brought up. Can I leave my windows open during a storm? What if my window is underneath a covered patio? No. Lightning can and has come into homes and cars where the windows were not fully closed. Can lightning come through a crack in my window? We are not aware of any documented cases of this occurring.

6. We watched two short lightning videos from the Internet. In one, lightning appears to hit an electric fence, leaving behind a linear cloud of smoke and/or dust. It was raining at the time of the video and Coleen questioned the presence of dust during a wet rainstorm. Carl thought the fence may have been vaporized by the lightning. In the second video, on a Florida highway, a dashcam captured a lightning flash which hit the vehicle immediately ahead. The video shows the strike at true speed and then in slow motion. The slow motion shows the strike hitting the vehicle in front and then what appears to be a second flash hitting the car with the dashcam. Thankfully, the drivers in both vehicles were okay, but the electronics in the front vehicle were ruined.
7. Carl sent an e-mail of a close-call lightning strike during a Houston Astros baseball game in Texas. The pitcher is getting ready to throw a pitch when the screen goes black momentarily, followed by the immediate sound of thunder, sending players running for shelter. Carl was curious whether or not the Astros had any lightning detection equipment that might give early warning of a potential strike. In July 2013, the LDC invited Larry Bull, Director of Activities and Athletics at the Cherry Creek School District here in Colorado. They have a lightning detection system that is set to detect lightning within 10 miles of the district's two football stadiums.
8. DC welcomes your questions. Please send them via e-mail to Steve Clark at [sclarktoto@gmail.com](mailto: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.

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Next meeting: St. Anthony Hospital. Friday, August 12, 2022, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM MDT. TOPIC: A Celebration of Michael Cherington and His Inquisitive Intellect.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist

## 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.**

Antczak, J., 2022: Lightning Strike Kills Woman, 2 Dogs in Southern California. *Associated Press*. June 22, 2022. Link: <https://www.aol.com/news/lightning-strike-kills-woman-2-143649717-050751654.html>

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Bowen, J. & Fox 13 News Staff, 2022: Coast Guard: 7 Rescued After Lightning Strikes Boat 100 Miles Off Clearwater. *FOX 13 News*. June 26, 2022. Link: <https://www.fox13news.com/news/coast-guard-7-rescued-after-lightning-strikes-boat-100-miles-off-clearwater>

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No Author Listed, 2019: Men Survive After Boat is Struck by Lightning. *FOX 35 Orlando*. August 19, 2019. Link: <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/men-survive-after-boat-is-struck-by-lightning>

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Johnson, C., 2022: British Husband of US Teen Drama *One Tree Hill* Actress Dies at Age 33 After Being Struck by Lightning During Boating Trip in North Carolina. *Daily Mail*. July 7, 2022. Link: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-10990091/One-Tree-Hill-star-Bevin-Princes-husband-dead-33-struck-lightning.html>

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Price, M., 2022: Watch As Lightning Bolt Leaves Two Vehicles “Fried” While Driving on I-75 in Florida. *The Telegraph*. July 7, 2022. Link: <https://www.macon.com/news/nation-world/national/article263207513.html>

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Hawley, C. & FOX13 News Staff, 2022: HCFR: Child Critically Injured in Lightning Strike at Riverview Park. *FOX 13 News*. June 30, 2022. Link: <https://www.fox13news.com/news/hcfr-child-critically-injured-in-lightning-strike-at-riverview-park>

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Robinson, J., 2022: Everyone Cleared the Field. Facebook video showing reaction to a nearby lightning flash at a Houston Astros Ballgame. June 30, 2022. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/514208016/videos/3232804890325999/>