

THE YEAR THAT PERFECT FORECASTS  
BECAME A REALITY

by Virginia Zones

Washington D.C., February 15, 1985: At a news conference here today, President Stockman announced that completely accurate weather predictions had finally been attained. Sharing the podium with the President was NWS Director Sam Celsius, who attributed the accomplishment to the long-awaited automation of field operations and services. Director Celsius stated that a "new era in U.S. weather forecasting has begun..."

Soilbank, Kansas, March 2, 1985: Hundreds of curious onlookers gathered around noon in this small farm town after the NWS, in a 9 a.m. bulletin, predicted that a tornado would occur here at 3:35 p.m. When the tornado roared in precisely in schedule, dozens were killed or injured. "I thought all this talk about perfect forecasts was just baloney," moaned a battered survivor from his hospital bed, "but they sure made a believer out of me."

Buttered Rum, Vermont, August 28 1985: New England's economy was jolted as virtually all of its ski resort owners declared bankruptcy and their employees were told to find other jobs, after a Weather Service prediction that nearly no snow would fall in the area during the coming winter. "In the old days," lamented a glum snowmobile manufacturer, "no one paid any attention to the forecasts. But now you know they'll be right on the button."

Billybeer, Georgia, September 15, 1985: Much of Florida remained deserted today, its population having fled northward after the NWS announced that the eye of Hurricane Hallgren, now forming near the African coast, would slam into northern Daytona Beach a week from tomorrow. "There's hardly a soul left south of Jacksonville," reported a Civil Defense spokesman, who added, "No one even talks about hurricane parties anymore." Meanwhile, officials in Washington dismissed as "totally baseless" reports that an amphibious Cuban force had landed in southern Florida. "Just to give you an idea how silly these rumors are," laughed a White House aide, "we've even heard that Fidel Castro has set up a command post in Miami."

Washington, D.C., November 30, 1985: At a news conference here today, President Castro proclaimed sweeping changes in the way weather predictions will now be made in the United States. Citing "certain deficiencies" in previous methods, the President announced greater future reliance on "extrapolation, measurements of the banding of Woolly Bears, and upper-air observations using kites." Sharing the podium with Castro was newly-appointed NWS Director Fred Fahrenheit, who revealed that now-unneeded "AFOS" equipment will be traded to the Iranians for ten barrels of crude oil. Director Fahrenheit stated that "a new era in Mideast weather forecasting is about to begin..."

List of articles scheduled for the next issue:

- "Alpenglow: A Rare Sunset," by Isadore L. Sonnier and Harold Romero.
- "Agricultural Weather Program," by Howard F. Lehnert and Harold A. Scott.
- "Comparisons of Heat Stress Indexes," by Robert Quayle and Fred Doebling.
- "Forecasting the Predominance of Frozen Precipitation: An Alternative For the Classification of Mixed Precipitation Events and the Verification of Precipitation Type," by Kermit K. Keeter and Robert P. Green.
- "Mesoscale Weather Observing Network Provides Sources of Detailed Meteorological Data For Albany, NY and Environs," by Doc Taylor.
- "Alaska Interior Thunderstorms," by Hugh D. Watson.
- "Hurricane Tides and Sea Level Pressures at Tampa, Florida 1848-1979," by Stephen M. Blumel.
- "A Comparison of Three Major Northward-Moving Gulf Coast Hurricanes, Camille, Eloise and Frederic," by Stephen M. Blumel.
- "Florida Summertime Cloud Cover From Satellite Data," by James A. Henry and Jeffrey A. Isaacs.
- "Wave Clouds and Severe Turbulence," by Samuel K. Beckman.