

The NWA: Connecting operational meteorologists in pursuit of excellence in weather forecasting, communication, and service.

No. 12 - 7

Effective Communication of Lightning Safety

William Roeder, Private Meteorologist/Lightning Safety Advocate

Teaching lightning safety requires the same two basic elements of any public

education effort: 1) motivation and 2) effective information. Motivating the public to learn lightning safety is easy. Lightning has been the second (now third) leading cause of storm deaths in the U.S., killing more than tornadoes or hurricanes. Lightning also inflicts life-long debilitating injuries on many more than it kills. Showing the contribution



of lightning deaths relative to other weather phenomena is useful in states where lightning is among the leading sources of weather deaths. Timing for lightning safety education is also important. There are three times for best teaching lightning safety: 1) just before the start of the local lightning season, 2) just before a large lightning outbreak is forecast and 3) just after a local lightning casualty is reported by the media.

Using effective lightning safety information is also easy. A strong consensus on lightning safety recommendations has emerged over the past decades. This strong consensus and consistency in teaching that information is essential to credibility. Several techniques for teaching lightning safety have proven effective: make the information useful in the real world, easy to use, easy to remember, and interesting to learn. Several slogans have been developed to make lightning safety easy to remember, especially "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Fortunately, lightning naturally lends itself to dramatic pictures, video, and sound effects, which helps make lightning safety education interesting.

Enlisting the media, especially television, is one of the most efficient ways to spread the lightning safety message to the largest audience possible. Myth busting has proven to be very useful and interviews with lightning survivors can be very compelling. Lightning casualty demographics show that teaching lightning safety to children 10 years of age and younger has the most impact. An interactive game using a cartoon character 'Leon the Lightning Safety Lion' was developed to help teach lightning safety to children, along with several posters. Surprisingly, adults also like the game. Many resources for teaching lightning safety are at the NOAA lightning safety website (www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov). Assistance on teaching lightning safety is available from William Roeder (wroeder@cfl.rr.com).

New NWA Scholarship in Statistical Meteorology

Dr. Harry R. "Bob" Glahn, longtime and recently retired Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Weather Service Meteorological Development Laboratory, is providing full funding for a new National Weather Association Scholarship. The "NWA Bob Glahn Scholarship in Statistical Meteorology" will be offered for the first time this year with the application period closing on Oct. 25. The scholarship will be \$2,500 - the largest scholarship offered by the NWA. Students in their final two years of undergraduate study when the scholarship is disbursed in January 2013 are eligible.

This scholarship is to support someone with a true interest in statistics and might be interested in a career in meteorology related to statistics. Good evidence of this would be some coursework in statistics or probability theory plus an expressed and demonstrated interest in this aspect of the profession.

See profile of Glahn on page 2

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Dr. Bob Glahn, Longtime NWA Member, funds New Scholarship

Courtesy of NOAA

Dr. Bob Glahn, a member of the National Weather Association for more than 30 years, is recognized worldwide for ground-breaking work in the use of applied statistics in automated weather forecasts. He is a key figure in the history of modern meteorology and operational weather forecasting. In the '70s he conceived and led the development and implementation of the Model Output Statistics (MOS) method of producing weather forecasts. MOS uses advanced statistical techniques to improve the accuracy of forecasts generated by computer models.

Glahn also played a critical role during the sweeping modernization program conducted by the National Weather Service in the '90s. He identified a new path to harness information technology that would move the products and services of the NWS into the digital age. Forecasters were freed from the

traditional burden of hand typing hundreds of text forecasts. A high-resolution forecast database was developed leading to a myriad of new digital products, which could be automatically produced. He has envisioned a process where forecasts would become more accurate, timely, detailed and automated. He promoted probability forecasts and decision theory concepts that can now be fully exploited with the National Digital Forecast Database by private enterprises. A world expert in meteorological data formats and compression technology, he has worked with the World Meteorological Organization to develop gridded formats that have allowed the National Weather Service and weather services around the world to significantly reduce the cost of data transmission across wideband data networks.

See box on page 1 about the scholarship he is funding.

Number of NWA Seals Approaches 1,000!

The NWA Weathercaster Seal of Approval program started in 1982 to promote quality weather broadcasting. The Seal certification number format (yymm###) includes the last two digits of the approval year and two digits for the approval month followed by a successive number (numbers began with 101). As of July 15, 2012, 928 NWA Weathercaster Seals of Approval have been awarded.

2011 New Seals

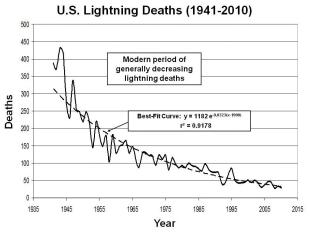
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A Statistical Model for U.S. Annual Lightning Fatalities

William Roeder Private Meteorologist/Lightning Safety Advocate

The number of fatalities from lightning has been steadily declining in the U.S. for decades. This makes it difficult to estimate the expected number of lightning fatalities in a particular year. One common practice for estimating weather fatalities is to use the most recent 30-year running average. Unfortunately,

that can be misleading if the fatalities from a particular weather phenomena have significant trend during that period. e, the example, For current running average for the U.S. is 55 lightning deaths, as compared to 33 deaths expected from statistical curve fitting, a 67 percent error. One common



remedy is to use the most recent 10-year running average to make the estimated rate more representative of the current time. Unfortunately, this method has the drawback that a single extreme event, large or small, can skew the results. In addition, a 10-year average doesn't completely eliminate the lag so the estimate is still not completely representative for the current year. The current 10-year running average for the U.S. is 39. A better approach to estimate the current fatality rate, when that rate is significantly changing, is statistical curve fitting over many years. This will also allow estimating the error bars for hypothesis testing to see if the rate is significantly different from other weather phenomena fatality rates. Finally, this will also allow projection of the estimated fatality rate and its error bars into the near future.

The expected annual lightning fatality rate in the U.S. is given by the following equation:

$$y = 1182.00*exp^{(-0.0323(x-1900))},$$

where x is the year. This is based on the period 1941-2010 (see figure) with r2 = 0.92.

For example, for 2011 the expected lightning fatality rate is: $1182.00 \exp^{(-0.0323(2011-1900))} = 32.8$.

The 5th and 95th percentile for the expected number of lightning deaths in the U.S. for any year is:

$$y = 649.49*exp^{(-0.0297(x-1900))}$$
 with $r2 = 0.92$, and $y = 1457.40*exp^{(-0.0304(x-1900))}$ with $r2 = 0.94$, respectively.

These statistical models can be used to raise awareness about lightning safety to the public. For example, if the number of lightning fatalities in a year is significantly higher than expected, that can be used to emphasize the need for more lightning safety education in the next year.

More details are available from William Roeder at wroeder@cfl.rr.com.

YOU are the NWA – YOU can Effect Change Here

Did you know we have about 3,000 members in the NWA? Whether you consider that number big or small, it represents growth and diversification in our organization. Over the last year, our largest growing membership category is that of student member. I have mentioned before how we are large enough to have an impact, yet small enough that anyone can make a difference. Our 2012 NWA Annual Meeting Program Chair, Jordan Gerth, started as a student member on the Council just 1.5 years ago. When the Council met last month at the mid-year meeting many questions were asked: How do we stay relevant? How do we increase the value the organization brings to you while maintaining our focus on affordability? How do we hang on to long-time members while attracting young members who have grown up in an entirely different world? People like Jordan who have stepped up quickly into leadership roles are making a big difference in helping us look to the future. If you are a new student member, you don't need to earn your stripes to make a difference. Find your interest

and join a committee – there is a place for you now.

Speaking of making a difference, the mid-year meeting also highlighted an immediate challenge we face. We have traditionally offered scholarships and grants as a means of rewarding effort



in the field of science and meteorology, as well as a way to introduce young potential members into the organization. This month's newsletter highlights a new scholarship opportunity (see article on Bob Glahn Scholarship) that illustrates one member's way of furthering the growth of the organization. Many of our grants and scholarships are perpetuated by NWA Member donations. The number of scholarships awarded, as well as their monetary amount, is based on these donations. Donations can be made by clicking on the NWA Member Portal button in the top left of the NWA home page (www. nwas.org). Links to donations for our scholarships are in the Resources box just below the membership signup links. Whether you start your own scholarship, or just want to ensure this vital service continues by making an online donation, please consider doing so. Imagine the huge difference 3000-plus members can facilitate by making a small contribution now!

Liz Quoetone, President

The Applied Meteorology Unit: Lessons Learned on Transitioning Research into Operations for America's Space Program

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The Applied Meteorology Unit (AMU) provides technology transition and technique development to improve operational weather support to America's space program. The AMU is funded and managed by NASA and operated by ENSCO, Inc., a contractor that provides four meteorologists with a diverse mix of advanced degrees, operational experience, and associated skills including data processing, statistics, and the development of graphical user interfaces. The AMU's primary customers are the U.S. Air Force 45th

Weather Squadron (45 WS) at Patrick Air Force Base, 30th Operational Support Squadron Weather Flight at Vandenberg Air Force Base, NASA's Ground Systems Development and Operations Program, NASA's Launch Services Program, the National Weather Service Spaceflight Meteorology Group at NASA Johnson Space Center, and the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Melbourne, Fla.

The AMU has transitioned research into operations with 122 projects over 20 years. They have developed a wide range of tools to satisfy customer requirements. A list of those projects and reports is at the AMU website (http://science.ksc.nasa. gov/amu). During this rich history, the AMU and its customers have learned many lessons on how to effectively transition research into operations. Some of these lessons include

- Instituting customer-driven tasking,
- Involving the customer throughout the process,
- Collocating with the operational customer and visiting geographically separated customers,
- Maintaining flexibility throughout projects,
- Providing high skill level and flexible skills mix,
- Managing and funding separately from the operational units, and
- Paying attention to customer relations.

A useful technique has been to assign a 'prime advocate' from the customers for each project in addition to the normal organizational liaison to the AMU. This advocate is usually the one with the most need for that project and so has the strongest interest in that project succeeding. Customer involvement has been critical to the

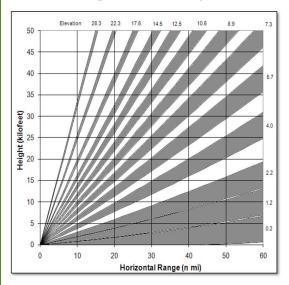


Fig. 2. The scan strategy developed by AMU to optimize operational utility from the new weather radar used by the 45 WS.

AMU's remarkable success and many awards from NASA, the National Weather Association, and two citations from the Navy's Center of Excellence for

Best Manufacturing Practices. Following are two brief

MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER Current Day: Jun 8 \$ Sounding: 2007159 10:33 Yes Was lightning observed in at least one of the KSC/CCAFS advisory circles yesterday between 0700 - 2400 EDT? > No Flow Regime SW: Low-level (1000-700 mb) ridge south of XMR
(SWI and SW2 regimes combined) SE-1: Low-level ridge between TBW and JAX SE-2: Low-level ridge North of JAX Uniform NW flow across the peninsula Uniform NE flow across the peninsula Thompson Index (TI) Benter the Thompson Index from this morning's 10 UTC XMR sounding Vertical Total (VT) Enter the Vertical Total from this morning's 10 UTC XMR sounding Average 825 - 525 mb RH Enter the average 825 – 525 mb layer relative humidity from this morning's 10 UTC \times MR sounding (rounded integer value without %; e.g. enter 65.2% as 65, 65.7% as 66)

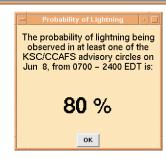


Fig.1. Example of the input (top) and output (bottom) from the AMU-developed lightning probability tool.

examples of AMU projects. 1) The AMU developed the lightning probability tool (Fig. 1), which integrates the important factors for lightning at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS) and NASA Kennedy Space Center (KSC) to produce a single optimized lightning probability. The new lightning probability tool provided a skill score 56% better than the previous operational tool. 2) The AMU improved the scan strategy of the 45 WS's radar (Fig. 2) to optimize for the various weather support requirements at CCAFS/KSC. It includes beam angles to detect lowlevel boundaries that are critical to the development of summer thunderstorms in Florida, to predict the onset of lightning, to evaluate Lightning Launch Commit Criteria, and to reduce the cone of silence. This new scan strategy improved the radar's vertical resolution in the key atmospheric electrification layer by 34% compared to the previous scan strategy.

More at http://science.ksc.nasa.gov/amu or contact AMU Chief Dr. Lisa Huddleston at lisa.l.huddleston@nasa.gov.



Students: Apply Now for Fall 2012 NWA Scholarships

The application period for the three Fall NWA scholarships is now open; they will be accepted through Oct. 25. In addition to the Arthur C. Pike and Phillips Family Scholarships, the NWA is pleased to offer for the first time the Dr. Bob Glahn NWA Scholarship in Statistical Meteorology (see page 1). The new scholarship will be presented to an undergraduate student who is in their last two years of study and who has demonstrated a true interest in statistics and might be interested in a career in meteorology related to statistics.

http://nwas.org/committees/ed_comm/application/

NWA 37th Annual Meeting Information

October 6-11, 2012 in Madison, Wisconsin



The meeting sessions will be held in the beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright designed Monona Terrace Convention Center in downtown Madison

Where business and inspiration meet.

Location & Schedule

Monona Terrace Convention Center One John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53703

The 2012 NWA Annual Meeting will include the annual Broadcaster Workshop and DVD swap, and the Fifth Annual Student Session both on Sunday, Oct. 7.

The general sessions will be held Oct. 8–11. The NWA annual awards luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 10.

Exhibits from NWA Corporate Members and others will be available Sunday through Tuesday.

Theme

"Synthesizing Weather Information for Society: From Observations to Action across our Communities".

Today's meteorologists understand that the best forecast means collaborating with weather partners in education, emergency management, government, research, broadcast media and more. At this year's meeting, the breadth of the professional community is invited to explore the emerging technologies, ideas, and science that not only allow us to improve weather forecasts but also to fine tune the message to customers and the general public.

www.nwas.org

Hotel Rooms Filling Up

If you have not reserved your hotel room yet, they are booking up quickly!! We urge you to make a reservation today: http://nwa2012.com/hotels/

More Info on Madison, the Meeting, the Program Planning & Social Media:

The meeting blog at http://nwa2012.com/ will be maintained by the NWA Annual Meeting Program Committee, for information on the events, the agenda, the hotels and the local area as well as breaking news.

NWA will also provide updates on this Web page, on the NWA Facebook page, Twitter and other social media. Please use the hashtag #NWAS12 for any tweets associated with the 2012 Annual Meeting. Attendees are most welcome to use their Twitter accounts to send out information, and retweet liberally.

All Annual Meeting information is located at: www.nwas.org/meetings/nwa2012

NWA Newsletter~JULY 2012 ~ 5

The Quantitative Precipitation Forecasting Component of the 2011 NOAA Hazardous Weather Testbed Spring Experiment

David Novak¹, Faye Barthold², Robert Oravec¹, Bruce Sullivan¹, Andrew Orrison¹, Mike Bodner¹, Steve Weiss³, Andy Dean³, Israel Jirak³, Chris Melick³, Jack Kain⁴, Adam Clark⁴, Fanyou Kong⁵, Ming Xue⁵, Patrick Marsh⁵, Kevin Thomas⁵ and Keith Brewster⁵

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²NOAA/NWS and I.M. Systems Group, Inc., Camp Springs, MD;

³NOAA/NWS Storms Prediction Center

⁴NOAA/ National Severe Storms Laboratory

⁵University of Oklahoma

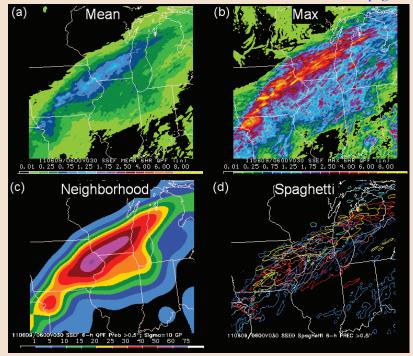
The NOAA Hazardous Weather Testbed's (HWT) Spring Experiment provides a unique collaborative environment that brings the research and operational forecasting communities together to explore emerging model guidance and forecasting techniques. The 2011 Spring Experiment was conducted over a five week period from May 9 to June 10, 2011, and featured quantitative precipitation forecasting (QPF), severe weather and convective initiation components. The QPF component, led by the NCEP Hydrometeorological Prediction Center (HPC), explored the use of storm-scale (~4 km grid spacing) deterministic and ensemble model guidance for forecasting precipitation associated with warm season convection.

Participants used storm-scale model guidance and observations to forecast the probability of exceeding 0.5 and 1.0 inch of precipitation during three near term six-hour periods. The deterministic guidance featured a variety of Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) model configurations with grid spacing of ~4 km. The experiment also featured output from a 24-member Storm Scale Ensemble Forecast system (SSEF) with 4 km grid spacing provided by the Center for Analysis and Prediction of Storms (CAPS) at the University of

Oklahoma. Finally, a seven member Storm Scale Ensemble of Opportunity (SSEO) consisting of readily available 4 km convection allowing model runs was also available.

The performance of the high resolution models relative to their operational counterparts was evaluated. The new 4 km NAM nest was rated as the best deterministic guidance source by both subjective participant assessments and objective verification conducted by the Developmental Testbed (DTC). Both the SSEF and SSEO were found to provide considerable value over the operational NCEP ensemble. The positive feedback about the SSEO was particularly significant because the SSEO relies on currently available high resolution

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Example of experimental ensemble forecast guidance for the 30-hour forecast from the SSEF valid 0600 UTC June 9, 2011, including (a) ensemble mean, (b) ensemble maximum, (c) neighborhood probability (smoothed probability field) of 0.50 inch, and (d) spaghetti plot of the 0.50 inch threshold.

PROFESSIONAL

NWA sponsored Annual Meetings, Conferences and Special Events

Oct. 6-11: 37th National Weather Association Annual Meeting

This Annual Meeting will be held in Madison, Wisc. See page 5 and http://www.nwas.org/meetings/nwa2012.

Other Meetings, Conferences and Special Events

Oct. 2-4: 16th Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop

VIRTUALLY hosted by the National Weather Service Forecast Offices in Billings and Glasgow. Registration information is available at http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/greatdivide/welcome.php?wfo=byz.

Jan. 6-10, 2013: 93rd American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting In Austin, Texas. http://annual.ametsoc.org/2013/?CFID=12137&CFTOKEN=14711286

April 8–12, 2013: NOAA Satellite Conference for Direct Readout, GOES/POES, and GOES-R/JPSS User In Miami, Fla. http://satelliteconferences.noaa.gov/Miami2013

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model guidance. A variety of visualizations of ensemble precipitation guidance were also assessed. Examples are shown in Fig. 1. Based on a subjective evaluation by the participants, spaghetti plots (Fig. 1d) were favored over more sophisticated ensemble visualizations.

The experimental forecast and model evaluation process has helped raise awareness of the challenges associated with warm season QPF, and has influenced model development by identifying guidance that adds significant value

compared to the current operational models. As a direct result of the experiment, many of the experimental datasets are now available to forecasters at the HPC. A full report of the 2011 Spring and other HWT experiments are available at http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/hmt/experimentsummaries.shtml.

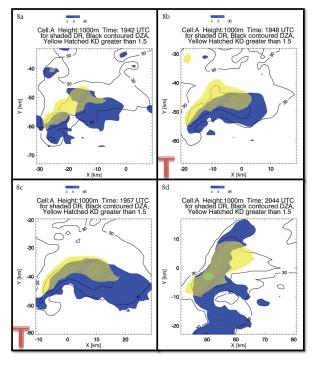
[The 2012 HWT Spring Experiment was held May 7-June 8, 2012. For more: http://hwt.nssl.noaa.gov/Spring_2012/.]

New Article in EJOM

Submitted by Michael Brennan, National Hurricane Center

A new paper was published in the NWA Electronic Journal of Operational Meteorology: 2012-EJ5, "Use of Dual-Polarization Signatures in Diagnosing Tornadic Potential" by Christina C. Crowe of NWS Huntsville, Ala., Christopher J. Schultz of University of Alabama in Huntsville, Matthew Kumjian of CIMMS at the University of Oklahoma and NOAA/OAR/NSSL in Norman, Okla., Lawrence D. Carey of University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Walter A. Petersen of NASA Wallops Flight Center in Wallops, Va.

The article builds upon previous research that indicated changes in dual-polarization fields (KDP and ZDR) are associated with varying dynamics and thermodynamics of the near-storm environment that may lead to tornadogenesis. Researchers analyzed C-band radar data for 20 storms from supercell, broken line, and quasi-linear convective system (QLCS) cases across northern Alabama. By studying the changes in values, spatial relationships, and evolution of the dual-polarization fields over the lifetime of each storm, differences were analyzed between the structures of the tornadic and non-tornadic storms. Links to several animations of the data are also provided in this article.



Four panel time trend of CAPPIs at 1 km elevation, for a tornadic cell from April 27, 2011 (Cell A). A tornado warning was in effect for all panels, and an EF4 tornado was on the ground from 1943-2033 UTC (indicated by the red T). Reflectivity (ZH) is contoured in black at 30 and 50 dBZ, specific differential phase (KDP) is shaded yellow for values greater than 1.5° km-1, and differential reflectivity (ZDR) is shaded blue for values greater than 3 dB (Figure 8 in paper).

New NWA Members from June 2012

Regular/Military/Retired

Jami Boettcher Aric Cylkowski Hiram Escabi Jr. Linda Gilbert Christopher Allen Hovanic Kelly L. Jesmer Dennis C. Kwilinski **Ed Mahoney** Austen L. Onek **Richard Orville** Lindsey B. Paster Robert Allan Prentice **Charles Ross** William P. Runyon Timothy William Troutman Joi VonRentzell Eric Waage

Students

Jennifer Marie Bentley Lee W. Campbell Robert K. Carroll Mallory Cato Johnathan E. Clark Katelyn Dotson Michael Groenke Dale E. Herschlag **Taylor Kanost** Genki Robby Kino Stacy Kraatz Seth Kutikoff Jonathan David Labriola Glenn P. Mckeever Thomas Brian McKenzie **Tiffany Meyer** Nicole Peterson John Sears John Turnbull **Quentin Walker** Michael W. Wilson Peter Woolcox James Zvolensky

Updating Your Contact Information

Have you moved recently, changed jobs, graduated from college, changed emails or phone numbers? If yes, please take a moment to double-check and update your NWA contact information. It is quick and easy to update via the NWA Member portal at member.nwas.org. Your information is secure; it is never sold and is only used in support of NWA member services.

If you have forgotten your password, you can request it to be reset in the member portal. If you have forgotten your log in, please contact assist@nwas.org or call 919-845-1546 for assistance. Thank you for taking the time to update your contact information. We want to ensure that you are receiving important information and communications from the NWA.



MIPORTANT DATES

Aug. 1: Nomination period for Annual NWA Awards closes

Sept. 6: Last day to reserve Annual Meeting hotel room at Inn on the Park

Sept. 7: Annual Meeting Preregistration Period ends

Sept. 8: Last day to reserve Annual Meeting hotel room at Concourse

Oct. 6 - 11: 37th NWA Annual Meeting, Madison, Wisc.

Oct. 25: Application period for NWA Arthur C. Pike, Phillips Family, and Bob Glahn Scholarships closes

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