Sterling Reporter

Newsletter of NOAA's National Weather Service Baltimore/Washington Forecast Office

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Meteorologist-In-Charge Jim Travers Retires

Jim Travers & Steve Rogowski

After graduating from New York University with a Master's in Meteorology in 1968, Jim entered the NOAA Corps as a LTJG. He spent the next 3 years aboard the NOAA Ship Discoverer and assigned to the Marine and Special Services Branch of National Weather Service, NWS, Headquarters. During this time, he worked with William McKee at NWS Eastern Region Headquarters to write a book on Marine Weather for Mariners. Jim was one of the first NOAA Corps Officers assigned to the NWS.

Jim Travers pictured during his retirement party with Barbara Watson (former Warning Coordination Meteorologist at Sterling) and Steven Zubrick (Science Operations Office at Sterling)

In 1971 Jim left the NOAA Corps for civilian life as a Meteorologist with the Marine Weather and Special Services Branch at NWS Headquarters, where he had been assigned as a NOAA Corps Officer. For the next several years he helped Max Mull with the National Marine Weather Program and Terry Noffsinger with the Agriculture and Fire Weather Programs.

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Inside This Issue

Jim Lee Selected as New Meteorologist-In-Charge

Jim Lee

Welcome to the Fall 2004 Edition of the ***Sterling Reporter***. As the recently-hired Meteorologist-in-Charge of this office, I want to use this opportunity to talk about our office's vision and core values, and provide some office goals for the year. I also will provide a brief glimpse of my background as a means to introduce myself to you.

First of all, I want to thank the staff here for giving me a warm welcome since coming onboard September 7th, and acknowledge my predecessor, Mr. Jim Travers, who retired this year with over 35 years of civil service. Mr. Travers left me with a great office staff, and I look forward to working with them for a long time to come!

Meteorologist-In-Charge Jim Lee

We recently had a station meeting, and I introduced this office vision: "***NWS Baltimore/Washington: Providing excellent forecasts and services for the National Capital Region, and a great place to work!"*** I want to ensure that our staff is well-trained, confident in what they do, and focused on our mission. I also introduced these core values to our staff: Our products and services are relevant and within the state of the science, every one of our customers and partners matter, every WFO staff member matters and contributes, our office embraces innovation, and ***everything*** we do must be done with excellence.

I recognize and value the contribution of our partners, including the emergency management community; radio and television broadcasters; the print and internet media; other local, state, and federal government agencies; our Cooperative Observers; amateur radio operators, and our SkyWarn Spotter Network. We can not accomplish our mission of protecting life and property in the National Capital Region without these strong partnerships.

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(Travers Retirement…continued from Page 1)

Jim was lured to the New York City Forecast Office as a Satellite and Marine Focal Point. He continued his Focal Point duties as well as worked as a shift Forecaster until 1975 when he was selected as the Eastern Region Marine and Special Services Meteorologist. During the next 5 years he handled the Eastern Region Marine, Agriculture, Fire Weather and Air Pollution programs as well as Special Projects such as Operation Sail on July 4th, 1976 in New York Harbor and the 1980 Winter Olympic Support in Lake Placid, New York.

In the fall of 1980, Jim was selected for a Lead Forecaster position at the Washington, DC Forecast Office. He worked rotating shifts till he was selected as the Deputy Meteorologist in Charge at that office.

In 1985 Bill Bonner, Director of NMC, selected him to head up the Monitoring and Aviation Branch at NMC. During that time Jim helped reorganize the NWS High Seas and Offshore Marine Programs and bring them into his Branch and a section of the National Hurricane Center. Also during this time, Jim was given responsibility for the Space Shuttle Support Program at the Johnson Space Flight Center in Houston, Texas.

In recognition of his accomplishments, Jim was selected as the Operations Division Chief at NWS Headquarters in 1989. In this position, he was given responsibility for modernizing all Weather Service Operational Programs, except Hydrology, to take advantage of the new technology being deployed. In addition, he was tasked with reestablishing diplomatic relations between NWS Headquarters and the field offices.

After six fun filled years, Jim returned to the field in 1995 as the Meteorologist-in-Charge of the modernized Baltimore/Washington Forecast Office. Ironically, his retirement party occurred the day after the tornado outbreak associated with the remnants of Hurricane Ivan. We wish Jim happiness in his retirement!

Hurricane Ivan Spawns Most Prolific Tornado Outbreak Ever Recorded in the Area

Steve Rogowski

On Friday September 17th, the worst tornado outbreak in recorded history to affect the local area was spawned by the remnants of Hurricane Ivan. Our office issued over 100 tornado, flash flood and severe thunderstorm warnings during the event, providing valuable lead-time to save lives and property. Detailed follow-up statements issued by the Sterling Office allowed the media to track each storm during their "wall-to-wall" coverage of the event.

We would like to thank our SKYWARN spotters and the public for their timely storm reports. These reports gathered in part by our dedicated HAM radio operators allowed us to provide the best possible service. Close contact with local Emergency Managers allowed for preparation before the event, quick action during the event, and timely recovery efforts after the event. Their help along with aid from local and state police and fire departments also allowed for a timely and complete survey of storm damage from around the region.

Much more detailed information about this tornadic event can be found at: http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/sept17tornadoes/

(Jim Lee…continued from Page 1)

As for me, I am a fifth-generation Washingtonian, with a B.S. in Physical Science (specialization in Meteorology and Mathematics) from the University of Maryland in College Park, and a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering (specialization in Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry) from Virginia Tech. I have been in civil service for almost 22 years, and I joined the NWS in 1987. In previous jobs with the NWS, I was with the WSR-88D Program, where I worked on the Principal User Processor and led the efforts of WSR-88D System Test. After the first few WSR-88D's were deployed, I took a position at NWS Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, where I helped write requirements for the AWIPS System. In 1993, I joined the NWS field ranks as the Science and Operations Officer (SOO) at the NWS Weather Forecast Office in Taunton, Massachusetts, which forecasts for most of southern New England. I spent seven years in Taunton, including the top two snowiest winters in Boston's 125 year recorded history! During this time, I was also selected to and graduated from the NWS Senior Leadership Potential Program. After seven years as the SOO in Taunton, I returned to NWS Headquaters, being selected as the Chief of the Fire and Public Weather Services Branch in the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services.

This year, as one of our office's primary goals, we are going to obtain organizational excellence through solid program management. We are looking forward this year to achieving these other goals: enhancement of our coastal flood program; integrating our public service unit into forecast operations; holding a public open house the weekend of April 30 - May 1, 2005; improving our electronics program maintenance and public forecast verification scores; issuing fewer false alarms in our convective warnings; and providing additional hydrologic training to our staff.

Finally, this office is all about serving our customers and partners, through the hard-working men and women on staff here. They are here to serve you, working around the clock and on-call, ensuring the National Capital Region receives excellent products and services from their local NWS Weather Forecast Office. If you have any questions or comments about our office, please contact me at 703-260-0107 x222 or send an email to James.E.Lee@noaa.gov

The Summer of 2004
June 1 - August 31, 2004
Christopher Strong

The summer of 2004 was a decidedly pleasant summer with a total lack of stifling heat. It was slightly wet with a surplus of rain, and days of rain, but in between the rain was a number of pleasant days in the 80s. In fact, far and away, the grand majority of the days had highs in the 80s this summer.

On the temperature side of things, the summer of 2004 was slightly cooler than normal in Washington, but still near normal. The urban landscape of Washington helped to moderate night time temperatures, so even though the average high temperature the summer was much cooler than normal, warmer than normal night time minimums helped to balance things out.

In Baltimore, which has its observation site at the more suburban location of Baltimore Washington International Airport, the night time temperatures were not able to moderated by an urban heat island and the average temperature for the summer was cooler than normal. In fact, it was tied for the 17th coolest summer on record.

The lack of hazy, hot and humid days was the reason. There were only eight 90 degree or warmer days in both Washington and Baltimore this summer. That's the least 90 degree days Washington has seen since way back in 1906, which had one less. The record is six days set back in 1889. The average for a summer is thirty. Baltimore had seven a few years ago in the summer of 2000, but was near the record as well.

Even more impressively, the highest temperature we reached in both Baltimore and Washington this year was only 92. That ties both cities 1886 record for the coolest high temperature for a year. Again, it was a summer with a striking lack of hot days.

Rainfall was a bit higher than the average. Washington had 16.67 inches of rain to rank as the 19th wettest summer on record, while Baltimore had a little less, 15.57 inches, which was enough to rank as the 28th wettest. Both cities summer rainfall total was superseded last summer, during the excessively wet year of 2003. The summer of 2003 rainfall ranked 11th in Washington and 16th in Baltimore.

There were 36 days with measurable rain in Baltimore, and 38 in Washington. The average is 29 days. Although that is a surplus of rain days, it was well shy of the record of 49 in Washington and 47 in Baltimore. An interesting fact for Baltimore was that that record was set a year ago in 2003, while the record least amount of summer rain days was set the year before during the drought year of 2002.

Four Sterling Office Meteorologists Take Part in Conference
Steve Rogowski

Meteorologists David Manning, Steven Zubrick, Christopher Strong and Steve Rogowski attended the American Meteorological Society's Severe Local Storms Conference in Hyannis, MA during October.

A group picture from an after-conference social gathering

The conference provided an opportunity to share in our collaborative research of the La Plata, Maryland Tornado as well as to keep tabs on the latest findings in our science by our peers.

(http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/Historic_Events/apr28-2002/ams_sls/)

Weather Review – June/July 2004
Cindy Woods, Storm Data Focal Point

For the detailed report on these weather events, see the Storm Data monthly reports on our website at: http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/Storms/Strmdata/index.htm

June

1st: Tractor trailer blown over by thunderstorm winds in Morgan County, West Virginia. Trees and powerlines downed across the West Virginia Pan Handle, Northern Virginia, and the Washington Metro Area.

2nd: Trees and powerlines downed countywide across Harford County by a thunderstorm.

9th: Over 100 people treated for heat related illnesses while visiting the casket of the Late President Ronald Reagan.

11th: Thunderstorms downed trees near Charlottesville and in Nelson County.

14th: Thunderstorms across north central Maryland produced flash flooding, downed trees, spawned a F1 tornado (from near Woodsboro to Libertytown in Frederick County) and a F0 tornado near Jarrettsville in Harford County.

15th: The same area was impacted by another round of thunderstorms which caused minor frame damage to a house, downed trees and powerlines and produced a flash flood (from 4 to 5 inches of rain which fell near Rockville in Montgomery County).

16th: Flooding closed roadways across Orange County, Virginia.

17th: F0 tornado near La Plata, Maryland. Lightning hospitalized a man visiting the Lincoln Memorial, and caused a handful amount of house fires across Maryland. Trees were downed sporadically across the region, most notably at Bowling Green Country Club in Warren County where 70 to 90 trees were toppled and a car was damaged by a felled tree. Flash flooding caused a mudslide in SE Washington DC, and collapsed a ceiling in Iverson Mall in Hill Crest Heights. A water rescue was performed on the Suitland Parkway.

25th: Minor Flash Flooding occurred across Calvert and Allegany Counties.

July

1st: Thunderstorms produced large hail across the area. Law enforcement officials reported baseball size hail across Baltimore County, while numerous quarter to golfball size hail reports were received. This cluster of storms also downed trees, while an office building was damaged in Prince George's County.

4th: Showers and thunderstorms which developed along a stationary boundary produced several inches of rain near Washington DC, flooding roadways across the Beltway communities, while canceling the National Independence Day Parade.

5th: Showers and thunderstorms developed ahead of an approaching cold front, and produced heavy rain, hail up to 1.5" in diameter, and downed trees (including 25 to 35 trees at one intersection in Baltimore County) across north central Maryland and northern Virginia.

7th: A warm front pushed north into Pennsylvania, providing the fuel for severe thunderstorms. Flash flooding, lightning damage and large hail were common with these storm. A funnel cloud was observed by personnel at the BWI control tower.

12th: Major flash flooding occurred in Harford County. Over 20 homes and businesses suffered damage, while over 32 water rescues were performed. Emergency Management Officials reported several feet of water standing in many areas. Some roads were completely washed out, prompting the Governor to declare a limited State of Emergency.

14th: A cold front triggered numerous showers and thunderstorms. These storms produced large hail and damaging winds across northeast and lower southern Maryland, along with northern Virginia. A F1 tornado developed in St. Mary's County near the town of California.

18th: Minor Flash Flooding occurred across Frederick County, Virginia.

27th and 28th: 2 to 5 inches of rain fell across the Baltimore-Washington Metro area, prompting flooding. Creeks and streets flooded across the area, while at least 3 water rescues were performed by US Park Police in The District. Flights to all 3 Baltimore-Washington Airport hubs were delayed or canceled.

NWS Sterling Winter Related Product Criteria

Winter Storm Outlook: Issued as a Special Weather Statement, this outlook provides a generalized progression of expected conditions from a developing winter storm in the 3 to 5 day range.

Winter Storm Watch: Issued 24 to 48 hours prior to the following forecasted conditions: an average of 5 inches of snow/sleet within a 12 hour period, glaze accumulation of one quarter inch or more, or enough ice to cause damage to trees and power lines in a 12 hour period, or a life threatening or damaging combination of snow and/or ice accumulation with wind in a 12 hour period.

Winter Storm Warning: Same criteria as Winter Storm Watch, when currently occurring or forecasted to occur during the current day.

Blizzard Warning: Snow or blowing snow reducing visibilities to a quarter mile or less for 3 hours or longer with 35 mph winds or higher.

Winter Weather Advisory: Issued when the following are currently occurring or forecasted to occur during the day: an average of 2 inches of snow accumulation, any ice accumulation, or blowing snow significantly reducing visibilities.

Wind Chill Advisory: Winds combining with cold temperatures will reduce wind chill readings below zero for a period of 3 hours or greater.

Wind Chill Warning: Winds combining with cold temperatures will reduce wind chill readings to 20 below zero or colder for a period of 3 hours or greater.

Wind Advisory: Wind speeds sustained between 31 and 39 mph and/or wind gusts of 46 to 57 mph for a period of 3 hours or greater.

High Wind Warning: Wind speeds sustained 40 mph or higher and/or wind gusts of 58 mph or higher for a period of 1 hour or longer.

Howard Silverman Promoted to Senior Forecaster

Steve Rogowski

We're pleased to pass along the news of Howard Silverman's promotion to Senior Forecaster. Howard has been a forecaster at the Sterling National Weather Service Office for six years.

Howard has led the internal performance and verification program at our office. A portion of his duties within this program is deriving verification scores of our watches and warnings from past events. By doing so, we are able to measure our performance against office, regional and national goals. Howard also is in charge of maintaining our Station Duty Manual, quality controls our public products, and assists our Warning Coordination Meteorologist as needed.

Howard Silverman takes a moment to pose for a picture during one of his forecast shifts

Before arriving at the Sterling office, Howard worked at offices located in Cincinnati, Muskegon MI, and most recently Albany NY.

Howard graduated from Lyndon State College in Vermont with a B.S. in Meteorology in 1993. Being a native of Boston, he roots for the Red Sox and Patriots. In his spare time, Howard is an avid hiker.

Senior Forecaster Neal Dipasquale and Electronic System Analyst Luc Gosslin Move On

Steve Rogowski

Luc Gosslin recently transferred to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Luc spent a year in charge of the electronics staff at the Sterling Forecast Office. We all wish Luc the best at his new job!

Senior Forecaster Neal Dipasquale received a promotion to Eastern Region Headquarters on Long Island in early October. Neal is returning home, as he grew up in New City, NY. He is a graduate of SUNY Oswego where he received a B.S. in Meteorology with a minor in Astronomy. While in College Neal volunteered at the office in Syracuse NY. He began his career in the NWS at the former office in Salem, OR. Neal transferred to Boise, ID, before being promoted to a Forecaster in Amarillo, TX. He served as Senior Forecaster in Sterling for over three and a half years. Neal was excited to begin his new job near where he was raised.

Sterling Office Reaches Out to Wounded Soldiers and Local Boy Scouts

Steve Rogowski

On September 19th, The Sterling Office was proud to host a tour for a group of soldiers wounded in the war in Iraq. In addition to learning about our operations, Jim Laver from the Climate Prediction Center provided an insight to our Agency's role in international forecasts which aid the United States Agency for International Diplomacy. The date is a familiar one in our minds, as it was the same day as the Hurricane Ivan tornado outbreak.

Roger Smith and John Darnley from the Sterling Office participated in a Boy Scout Fall Camporee on October 9th, at Ft. Washington Park, Maryland. The theme of the Fall Camporee was Emergency Preparedness. Roger and John educated the boys in groups of about 25 during 30 minute sessions about weather safety and our role in saving lives and property. Thanks to the efforts of John and Roger, 145 boys were able to complete the requirements to earn their weather merit badge.

Upcoming SKYWARN Classes

For more information check out the SKYWARN website: http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/skywarn/classes.html

BASICS I SKYWARN CLASS

This class is essential for becoming a SKYWARN Spotter. It is a 3-hour class that covers the basics of how SKYWARN and the National Weather Service operate, what you need to report and how, and how to spot severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. This class is a pre-requisite for all other classes.

BASICS II SKYWARN CLASS

This class is an optional sequel to the Basics I class. It is 2 1/2 hours long. It is good for spotters who need a refresher or feel they what additional information and training. It reviews the basic spotting techniques and covers more information about thunderstorms and Doppler radar. You must have taken Basics 1 to attend this class.

WINTER STORM CLASS

This is an optional 2 1/2 hour class that is occasionally offered seasonally (November - January). Its focus is on the Mid-Atlantic snow storms and nor'easters. It looks at the frequency and history of the storms, how they form and the difficulties in forecasting them, how to be prepared, how to measure snow and ice, and how SKYWARN operates during a winter event. You must have taken Basics I to attend.

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