

I. COMMENTARY

Recent events in the middle east and recurring threats of oil shortage again remind us of possible gas lines and even higher fuel prices. It is well for storm chasers to reflect, while they can, on their good fortune to have chased during the 70's (most started in the early part of that decade). These are the "good old days" we're living through now, and that -someday- we'll look back on with nostalgia. We may plan to chase forever, like we plan to live forever, but that will not be. Whether due to inflated fuel prices, family or other considerations, these chase years will eventually pass. But, one thing is certain. Those who shared them will never forget them.

(Correction: The last issue of ST was prepared late at night and the COMMENTARY section inadvertently reported two Grand Island tornadoes "that were counter-clockwise." This should have read "clockwise.")

II. ROSTER

III. BULLETIN BOARD/COMMERCIAL MARKET -S- FOR PICTURES

IV. CAMERA TIPS

FUNNEL FUNNIES:

Fact X Fiction
Offering to the Storm Gods

Have you ever had one of those chases where you blast out on the highway to get to that fast-moving dryline bulge position only to find that the Cb's refuse to rotate when they finally get going? Sure, any experienced chaser has had this experience. But is there anything you can do, besides complain, to tempt Mother Nature into getting those Cb's spinning and doing their "thing" for your camera?

I recently had this advice related to me by a veteran storm chaser. He says it's a surefire trick that works every (well, nearly every) time! The key to it is that even Storm Gods can't resist the offer of junk food.

On a recent storm pursuit, this chaser blasted up Interstate 44 to get into the "target" area of northeastern Oklahoma. When he and his companions finally caught up to the newly developed storms, they realized that something was wrong. "This stuff just ain't gonna deliver." So, they wheeled into the first 7-11 they could find up the road; the philosophy being: When all else fails, eat! At least that way the chase wouldn't be a total loss. After making their purchases, the chaser and his comrades shuffled out into the parking lot, observing to the east the lifeless cell that they had earlier been pursuing. "Show it your fried pie, wave that chocolate bar at it. Here's my Coke," he exclaimed, holding his paper cup defiantly in the air in a taunting gesture. Within minutes, the cumulus towers hardened, then exploded like an atomic mushroom cloud, and "began rotating like mad." "This is really wild," exclaimed the chasers and off they went in hot pursuit. Well, their storm did slow down in its forward motion long enough to back-build and produce a damaging wind circulation beneath its bulbous, flanking cloud base. But, partly because of uncooperative roads and partly due to disbelief at the remarkable recovery the storm had made moments earlier, the chasers were unable to get into good viewing position. They were unable to catch up with the storm again, and darkness soon fell.

The moral to this story: Be prepared to "feed" your storms. Remember, the best way to a storm's heart (i.e. updraft) --is through its (?) ...stomach.

-- Randy Zi pser



V. TRAVEL TIPS [by David Hoadley]

Storm chasers may want to consider safeguarding themselves against personal liability claims from their passengers -or relatives acting on their behalf (who may not be as understanding), resulting from storm related accidents. On each chase, the driver is introducing his or her passenger to hazards not normally faced by most people.

I did this for the Chicago Tribune reporter who traveled with me this spring. The following are two ways of doing this, through a short form or a (preferred) long form.

SHORT FORM:

Hold Harmless Agreement

I, _____ in return for valuable consideration receipt of which is hereby acknowledged do hereby and voluntarily disavow any past, present or future liability claim against _____ (presently residing at _____) or his estate by myself, heirs, assigns or anyone representing me, my family and heirs or my estate regarding any personal injury, death or property loss suffered by me while accompanying him during the period _____ to _____, due to any mishap.

Signature _____

Date _____

LONG FORM:

Agreement

This Agreement made this _____ day of _____, between _____ and _____, Witnesseth:

Whereas, _____ during the period of _____ and _____, will travel to certain locations in the United States for the purpose of photographing tornadoes and storms, and

Whereas, _____ has been photographing tornadoes and storms in the U.S. for approximately _____ years and has achieved notoriety for his photographs and

Whereas, _____ wishes to travel with _____ from _____, _____ to _____, _____ for the purpose of obtaining photographs of tornadoes and storms and of writing a newspaper story regarding such for his employer, _____.

Now, therefore, it is agreed as follows:

1. _____ will permit _____ to travel with him during the period approximately _____ through _____, _____ for the purpose of locating and photographing tornadoes and storms.

2. _____ will use his expertise to locate tornadoes and storms.

3. _____ will pay all of his own costs including an agreed upon percentage of gasoline and oil for _____'s automobile.

4. _____ expressly agrees to indemnify and save _____ harmless from and against any and all claims, loss or damage, injury and liability however caused, resulting from, arising out of, or in any way connected with _____'s travels as set forth above.

5. This Agreement shall inure to and be binding upon, the heirs, devisees, legatees, executors, administrators, successors and assigns of the parties hereto.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement this _____ day of _____, _____.

(Your signature)

(Other signature)

State of _____
City/County of _____, to wit:

I, the undersigned Notary Public in and for the State and City/County aforesaid, do hereby certify that _____, whose name is signed to the foregoing Agreement has acknowledged the same before me in my State and City/County aforesaid.

Given under my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, _____.

Notary Public

State of _____
City/County of _____, to wit:

I, the undersigned Notary Public in and for the State and City/County aforesaid, do hereby certify that _____, whose name is signed to the foregoing Agreement has acknowledged the same before me in my State and City/County aforesaid.

Given under my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, _____.

Notary Public

Next issue is the annual poetry one. Please send your favorites for possible inclusion therein. Also, send along any appropriate contribution to the newsletter. At this time, I'm just about out of material from readers for future articles. Other chasers and I look forward to hearing from YOU!