

I. COMMENTARY

Chase 1981 is mostly in the slide albums and film canisters now. Yours truly did not fare so well this year: nine small funnels and one dimly seen pair of dust tubes under the base of a wrapping gust front northeast of Paducah, Texas (probable tornadic circulation). I was repeatedly in the right place but encountered only small funnels or after-dark storms. Two tornado watches were canceled three hours after they began. One box "lined-out," as I watched with sinking apprehension, squarely in the middle of the area. The best opportunity was blown on the last, day out (Saturday, June 13), when I went with a Kansas City tornado box and ignored my own forecast. I wound up 100 miles out of position, while eight (8) tornadoes marched across my forecast box. The NWS box included five tornadoes, 3 in the extreme southwest corner of their watch (in my box) and 2 others in the northeast corner. This is the last time I doubt my own forecast (did the same damn thing last year with similar results). Ah, well ..



1981 was marked by additional publicity for chasers. Al Moller was extensively written up in an AP wire story. Subsequently, a People Magazine reporter and photographer met and traveled with several chasers. An article is expected, possibly on the street early next year. Such increasing publicity seems to be a natural outgrowth of our unique hobby, and, while few of us have sought it, it seems to be overtaking us. As increasing exposure comes to chasers, it is well to reflect on what this means and where some of us are "coming from" on it. For some time, I shunned publicity and suggested that this was the better course for chasers, generally. When I was considering whether to allow a Chicago Tribune reporter to accompany me last spring and do a story, I wrote for advice from fellow chasers. From ten inquiries, five responses were received, all positive. I want to share with you two excerpts, which were strikingly similar and touch on a significant point. After agreeing with me regarding general concerns over adverse publicity, the need to downplay sensational aspects, and to emphasize the difficulties and dangers, each respondent volunteered a curious observation:

"But, I also think we shouldn't try to suppress potentially interested people or attempt to restrict the storm chasers to an elite 'club'." (C. A. Doswell)

"None of us can (or should try to?) dictate who will be the chosen few permitted to go out and witness a natural event." (J. F. Weaver)

There is something here (almost an implied obligation). We share the ability and resources to repeatedly encounter, at close range, a magnificent natural phenomenon that few other people can even comprehend. However we choose individually to deal with public inquiries, we should not become sectarian or elitist in our response, seeming to deny from others access to or information about these great storms. This does not mean going to another extreme of leading chase convoys or loading your car with thrill seekers. It suggests that a balance needs to be struck, which will vary from chaser to chaser. As increasing publicity comes our way, the pressures to make the right decision in each instance will not be easy. I think the two writers above said it, very well. In our natural and understandable wish to remain free and unencumbered to chase storms, we should avoid turning inward. What we have each experienced, I think, enlarges the human spirit. Somehow, this needs to be shared.

II. ROSTER

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

The Time-Life Books staff have done some additional work on a forthcoming book about tornadoes and have asked me to pass on their photographic requirements. They ask, initially, to see your originals, which they will immediately duplicate and return. When final selection is made, you may be contacted and asked to send the originals for no more than about a month. The whole drift of this is to keep the originals in your hands as long as possible. For those of you who already have them, I am sure that good quality duplicates would also be acceptable in the initial mailing. Photography should be sent to: Barbara Hicks, Picture Research, Time-Life, 777 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. I believe that this will be a first, class production, so you are encouraged to participate as much as possible. Picture submissions are especially solicited in several "theme" areas, as follows:

1. For a cover picture, a tornado with no man made objects in the picture such as telephone lines/poles, structures, roads, etc. I presume that this also means a high contrast picture with some color differentiation, suitable for enlargement.
2. People running toward a shelter, with a tornado or threatening storm sky in the background.
3. Developing storm clouds characteristic of what will produce tornadoes, which actually were tornado

breeders.

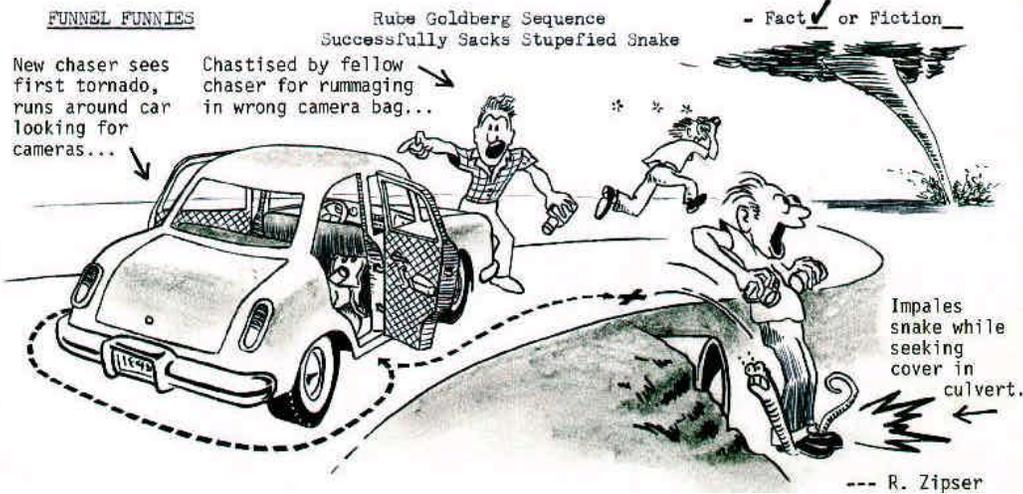
4. Storm clouds, developing or developed (line squalls, hailers, etc.), which were non-tornadic. Enough of the formation should be shown, such that the layman could tell the difference in similar, real-life situations.
5. The first tornado picture. Ms. Hicks is pursuing one possibility in Kansas but has very little specific information to go on (she does have a copy of the previous ST article on this subject).
6. Ground traces of suction vortices from or close to ground level. She has seen the Fujita aerial pics but desires a closer ground angle that displays good perspective, with clear foreground detail receding into the background.
7. Damage to dangerous structures such as nuclear reactors. Other possibilities might be damage to Government installations, such as Air Force bases, etc.
8. "Believe it or not" type pictures, such as straws through trees, wood through iron, cars through second story windows, etc. Unpublished pictures are preferred.
9. Pictures of houses/structures actually disintegrating beneath a tornado. I believe that something like this was shown at the last severe storms conference. If any of you have the address of the photographer, Ms. Hicks would very much appreciate the information.
10. Are any photographs extant from any of the Codell, Kansas tornadoes that struck that town on May 20, 1916, 1917 or 1918?
11. Sequence type photo series showing the life cycle of a tornado and/or a sequence showing a tornado approaching closer and closer to the viewer. Note: Ms. Hicks has seen or is aware of the Enid tornado pics but would prefer another tornado sequence - again, unpublished work is preferred.

That's about it. Don't overlook those unusual cloud shots, that no one can anticipate but which just might "fill the bill" for this particular publication.

IV. CAMERA TIPS

V. TRAVEL TIPS

FUNNEL FUNNIES: Rube Goldberg Sequence Successfully Sacks Stupefied Snake



VI. FEATURE - Call for Articles [by David Hoadley]

I am currently out of articles for future newsletters. If Storm Track is to survive, I need new material from you, the reader. Whether it be for the Feature section, an interesting account, of a storm chase, some tentative ideas for a future professional paper, camera tips, humorous encounters - anything! I am seeing too much of my own work and not enough of others. Unless this changes over the next few months, I may be obliged to conclude the newsletter. Not that this is a bad thing or entirely unexpected. For various reasons, it may be time for ST to evolve on out of the scene. Instead of padding it, with inconsequential events or patter, I would rather see it pass with the same high quality which you and I have tried to give it over the past four years. The future will tell... .