

## I. COMMENTARY

This past week, the Editor of ST and his 7 year old daughter flew to Bismarck, North Dakota for a 25th High School Class Reunion and a visit with relatives. His considerate cousin, with whom he invested several days of camaraderie and enlightened conversation, repaid this visit with a phone call to report on 4-5 tornadoes that occurred in west and central North Dakota one day after I left! Moreover, he was looking at a picture of one 2-3 miles south of the State Capitol in Bismarck (5:08 PM -- excellent, daylight for photography), with the Capitol building in the foreground!! It had been on the ground for 17 miles -- or about 25 minutes!!! After a round trip of 2,500 miles, I am one day too late!

"I grow old . . . I grow old .  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled."  
- T. S. Eliot

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I have begun to hear some feedback to my last appeal for articles, etc. In response to one suggestion from John Weaver, ST introduces a Letters to the Editor section for your informal news notes, commentary, etc. To help promote this and other responses from you -the reader- I am enclosing a self-addressed/stamped envelope and paper for your use. This makes it that much easier for your response. Your input is the lifeblood of "Storm Track. Remember to write. ST is a newsletter by, for and about people who are fascinated by and chase/photograph tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. Now your response is as close as the nearest pen (I don't plan to mail these; you'll have to do this on your own).

## II. ROSTER

Let me know if you specifically want your name/address included (as was done for others in earlier issues of ST). Inclusion here lets other chasers know that you would like to get in touch with them for general correspondence. Otherwise, I will respect your privacy and omit, such information.

## III. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

".. I was sorry to read into your last issue your obvious discouragement and your thoughts of ending the paper. I don't think that Storm Track has begun to fulfill its potential in terms of providing a forum for chasers -- professional and amateur alike. I don't know what the problem is in getting feedback from the subscribers. Perhaps a 'Letter to the Editor' section would break the ice. My reason for not contributing more, is simply that I never think of it until I'm reminded. I'll try to send something in from time to time. ... Again, Dave, I urge you to continue, at least for a while. One function becomes clear right, now, as I tell you that a young lady in (I believe) Iowa came up with the most remarkable sequence of tornado life-cycle slides that I've seen. They would be perfect for the Time-Life needs. Unfortunately, I don't remember her name, and I've lost track of the person that knows -- Kelvin Droegemeier (former student asst at NSSL). If you could locate him, he would be able to help obtain the slides. They are well worth the trouble."

--- John F. Weaver

(How about it chasers? Anyone know where Kelvin is?)

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"Mrs. William H. Johnson announces the marriage of her daughter Sharon Kay to Mr. John L. Marrs on Saturday, the ninth of May Nineteen hundred and eighty-one, Las Cruces, New Mexico." (Received the 2nd week of June)

## IV. BULLETIN BOARD/COMMERCIAL MARKET -S- FOR PICTURES

Barbara Hicks of Time-Life tells me that serious selection of tornado pictures/slides will begin about the third week of August, so you are urged to submit these by then (see the last issue of ST for details).

## V. CAMERA TIPS

## VI. TRAVEL TIPS

## FUNNEL FUNNIES

## VII. FEATURE

Gene Moore SPARKLES Again! [by John Weaver]

"Long time tornado chaser Gene Moore of Oklahoma City intercepted a lightning bolt while chasing in Oklahoma this year. He came out of it with only minor damage, but tells a hair-raising story.

Gene has been chasing for nearly fourteen years and has recorded scores of successes. His 'crew' on the day of his mishap (May 23, 1981) were also experienced storm chasers. They were Mike Neese (seven tornadoes in '81) and Steve Cone (two-year veteran of the vortex. Gene's mission was to obtain video

tape footage of tornadoes for the television station (UHF-43) for which he does the weather. Gene was camera man, Mike operated the support package and Steve was to document with slides.

As Gene tells it, they had just begun filming a tornado near Katie, a small town about fifty miles to the south of OKC. Another group of chasers had arrived, and one (Chuck Robertson) was leaning against a wire fence which ran beside the road. The scene was almost pastoral. A mile and a half to the north-northeast a tornado had touched down. It was quiet -- birds could be heard singing in the vicinity. They had seen no lightning, heard no thunder, nor felt even a drop of rain. The location seemed perfect. Then, all hell broke loose.

Gene suddenly began hearing a loud, continuous buzzing, and his hair reacted to the static by literally standing on end. An anvil to ground bolt struck a nearby power pole. The charge traveled down the pole to the fence and jumped out to Gene before he realized what was happening." (Gene told the Editor that he just had time to say "Oh.." and was knocked to the ground, ten feet back, before he could finish "...God.") "Gene flew off his feet, spinning, and, as he did so, a spark, accompanied by a loud crack of sound, flew from his hand and hit Steve Cone. Steve went down. Mike had already been knocked to his knees, when the charge crossed the cable connecting the mini-cam to the support



package, Gene landed near the road, on the brink of consciousness, feeling 'numb' from head to toe. Meanwhile, Chuck Robertson, who had been leaning on the fence, caught the brunt of the shock in his hands and rushed out into the road. Gene raised himself to look around. Mike was down, trying to rise. Steve was up on his feet, but a little wobbly. As Gene sat up, then stood, a tingling washed over his body, 'similar to the tingling one feels when a foot or leg has been asleep.' The tingling was overpowering and forced him to sit back down. After a few more minutes of recovery time, the group tried to resume the chase ..." (Gene told the editor that, after driving a few miles up the road, one of his two passengers asked why he was driving north while the tornado was moving east.

Gene turned around and said something to the effect that, "Why, I'm chasing the tornado." At which point, one of the 'crew' turned to the other and said "I think we've got problems." At this point, they took Gene home to recover).

"The next day, Gene reports, all of them had symptoms very similar to the flu; namely a feverish feeling, nausea, aching muscles/joints and an overall weakness. Within 48 hours, small portions of Gene's hair had turned gray. However, as I write this note, all have recovered and none report any long-term effects.



So, what is the point of this account, apart from entertainment? It is that even the most experienced chaser should remind himself regularly of the thunderstorm's greatest killer -- lightning. Every one of us should be constantly aware of our surroundings regarding conductors, etc. We should consciously remind ourselves to 'feel' for incipient lightning-strikes as we work the storm, and we should all be aware of the safety position to assume at the slightest hint of trouble (i.e. squat down on your haunches -- like you're taking a deuce in the woods, and then make your body as small as possible. Continuing to stand invites the first strike, and laying flat on the ground maximizes the area of electrical potential).

Remember, you may not get quite as great a charge out of your chase if you conduct yourself properly, but you sure can avoid a lot of static (Sorry Gene, I couldn't resist)."