



Storm Spotter's Newsletter



Mount Holly, NJ Edition

November 2006

New Newsletter for Spotters

By

Larry Nierenberg, Meteorologist and Editor

The National Weather Service in Mount Holly, NJ, has created this newsletter to provide a unified information source and to help support and credit our region's storm spotters. The newsletter will be published twice a year, generally one issue in the fall and one in the spring. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide pertinent information, recaps of interesting weather from the past year and interesting articles for our storm spotters. Furthermore, we will include dates and times for upcoming basic and advanced storm spotter training classes, as renewing your spotter ID every two years is strongly encouraged.

The newsletter will be posted on the office website (www.erh.noaa.gov/phi). If you know someone who does not have internet access, please contact me via (skywarn@noaa.gov), so I can mail them a paper copy. Lastly, important information will be included about the Mount Holly weather office to keep our spotters up to date.

Special thanks go out to Matt Porcelli, a meteorology student at Penn State and one of our summer interns for putting together a lot of this newsletter.

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Weather Trivia

How many days in length was the longest dry stretch (no measurable precip.) in Philadelphia, PA? (as recorded at the airport)

(Answer on page 5)

From the Desk of the MIC

By

Gary Szatkowski, Meteorologist –In-Charge

The role of storm spotters has never been more important for the National Weather Service. Spotters provide valuable real-time information during a weather event, helping the local weather office provide more detailed and accurate warnings. Specific descriptions of severe weather help encourage residents to take proper action when a warning is issued. Spotter reports also help contribute to the nation's climate archive. Reports of severe weather, snow depth, and heavy rainfall help mark the nation's climate extremes and add valuable data to the ongoing discussion regarding climate change. Being a storm spotter is an excellent public service. Even more importantly, a successful National Weather Service could not exist without storm spotters. Thank you for your vital contribution.



Winter Weather Safety

- +Stay warm with several layers and limit exposure outdoors during extreme cold.
- +Heed watches and warnings from the National Weather Service.
- +Communicate with relatives to ensure your location is known.
- +Traveling by car during hazardous winter weather is strongly discouraged.
- +During winter storm events, if travel is a must, pack an emergency kit with a cell phone, blankets, flashlights, small shovel and sand for traction.
- +The best decision would be to ride out the storm indoors.

Blizzard of 2006

While gently falling snow can be soothing to watch, the whiteout conditions experienced from Boston to Philadelphia were anything but comforting. From February 12-14, snow blanketed portions of the east coast from Virginia to Maine and buried many of the big cities. The Big Apple reported the largest 24 hour snowfall of 26.9", exceeding the previous record of 26.4" set in 1947.

As the storm system bombed off the coast, strong banding occurred along the I-95 corridor leading to snowfall rates of three to four inches per hour. The near zero visibilities along with blowing snow led to treacherous driving conditions for a few hours during the morning of February 14. At the height of the storm, all three major airports around New York City were closed, while 50% of Philadelphia flights were cancelled. Along with travel problems, 300,000 customers across the states of New York and Pennsylvania lost power.

Due to the dry, fluffy nature of the snow, cleanup was unusually quick. Business returned to normal in a couple days. Other snowfall totals around the area included 17" in Trenton, 12.5" in Philadelphia, and 15.2" in Allentown, PA. Thanks to spotters across the area, hundreds of snowfall totals were received to help track and log the Blizzard of 2006.

~Matthew Porcelli

Reader Submissions Wanted

While many of our staff here at the National Weather Service will be writing articles for the newsletter, we are persuading any of our readers to send in their storm stories and pictures to be included on our next newsletter. The stories should be from one to three paragraphs long and provide personal accounts of the severe thunderstorm or severe winter weather experienced. Also, any pictures to illustrate the story would be greatly appreciated.

All submissions will be evaluated for their content and the best will be chosen to have a section within our newsletter. It will be quite exciting to have a newsletter dedicated to storm spotters, as well as have portions of the paper written by storm spotters.

Send all submissions to: phi.skywarn@noaa.gov

Winter Normals

	Jan. High	Jan. Low	Seasonal Snow
Philadelphia, PA	39.0°F	25.5°F	21.1"
Allentown, PA	35.0°F	19.1°F	32.9"
Atlantic City, NJ	41.4°F	22.8°F	16.3"
Wilmington, DE	39.3°F	23.7°F	21.3"



Delaware River Flooding June 27-28, 2006

Even as the rain began falling on the 22nd of June, the National Weather Service was already preparing for a major flood event across the region. As the days continued to pass, the rain never ceased, and the tropical air mass held in place. With saturated soil and rising rivers, the final push occurred with tropical system Alberto sending crest heights to historical levels.

The river crested at Rieglesville and Belvidere as the fourth highest flood on record. Flood damage was occurred along the length of the Delaware River. Even as the sun began to shine, the river continued to rise in Trenton to 25.1 feet, 5 feet above flood stage reaching the fifth worst flood on record. Record flooding also occurred along the Schuylkill River with the second highest flood recorded in Reading with a crest height of 23.6 feet, 10.5 feet above flood stage.

Seven-day rainfall totals, received by many of our spotters exceeded 16 inches in Schuylkill County, while reports of 8 inches were common west of the NJ border. The persistent heavy rain over such large areal coverage led to the high crests. This rain event removed the drought across our entire region.

Severe Thunderstorm Event July 18, 2006

As the third day of ninety degree weather ensued for the Delaware Valley, a large damaging line of storms developed known as a bow echo. The storms marched from west to east along I-76 causing wind damage across Chester and Montgomery County. Particularly hard hit were the areas of Downingtown and Conshohocken where tens of thousands of customers lost power. Winds were clocked in many locations at 60 to 70 mph.

Bow echoes cause strong winds aloft to drive toward the ground uprooting trees and downing power lines. After the storm's aftermath, nearly 300,000 residents were without power, and some were not expected to regain power for nearly a week. The extreme number of power outages is the highest number of people affected by thunderstorm related power failure. The thunderstorms were ranked as the fourth highest number of power outages this area has seen, rivaling even the most vicious ice storms.

Storm spotters were exceptionally helpful in reporting wind damage across the area. Over forty reports of wind and hail were phoned into the National Weather Service and were vital to keeping storm information as current as possible.

2006 Summer Averages and Departures

	Philadelphia, PA	Allentown, PA	Atlantic City, NJ	Wilmington, DE
June Temp/Depart	72.8°F / +0.5°F	69.4°F / +0.9°F	70.9°F / +1.2°F	71.3°F / -0.2°F
June Precip/Depart	7.95" / +4.66"	9.13" / +5.14"	5.05" / +2.39"	9.40" / 5.81"
July Temp/Depart	79.4°F / +1.8°F	75.9°F / +2.6°F	78.0°F / +2.7°F	78.1°F / +1.5°F
July Precip/Depart	4.27" / -0.12"	8.17" / +3.90"	5.20" / +1.34"	6.05" / +1.77"
Aug. Temp/Depart	78.1°F/+1.8°F	72.7°F/+1.5°F	76.6°F/+3.1°F	76.7°F/+1.7°F
Aug Precip/Depart	3.93"/+0.11"	2.41"/-1.94"	3.68"/-0.64"	2.59"/-0.92"



Weather Classroom

A Lesson in Meteorology



Measuring Snow

By

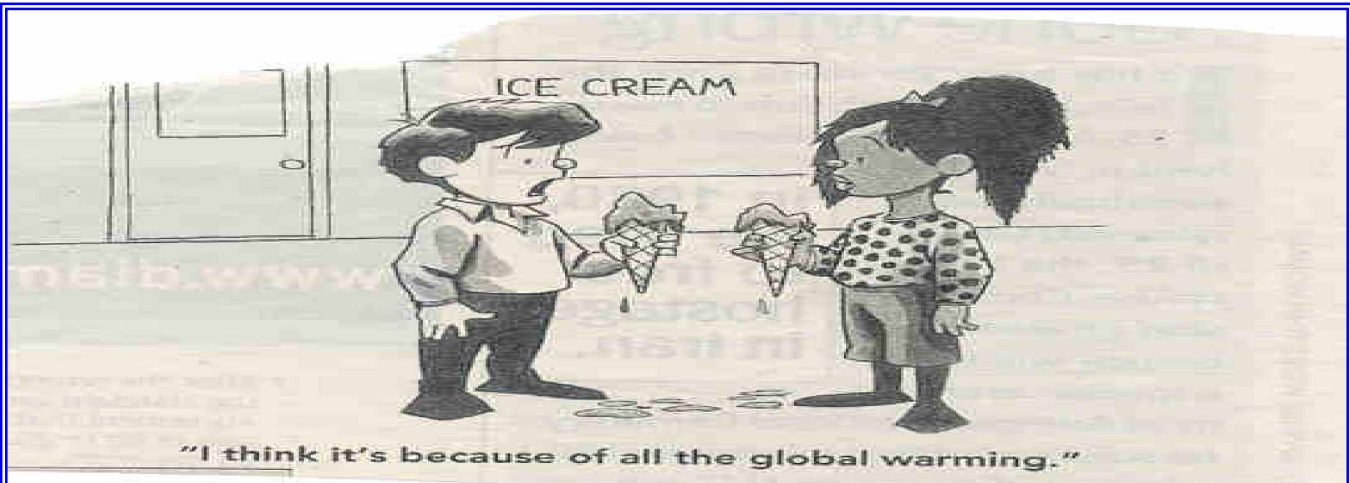
Joe Miketta

Warning Coordination Meteorologist

Snow depth is one of the elements spotters report to their Skywarn nets and the NWS. Look for a uniform area of snow in which to make several measurements, then average those measurements to the nearest inch. Don't make these measurements in drifts, nor in areas where the wind has blown the snow away. Make sure measurements contain only the new snow which fell during the current storm. Avoid measuring snow on car roofs, driveways and sidewalks since these surfaces are subject to wind and heat anomalies. A snowboard eases the measuring process. Make sure the snowboard is exposed to the ambient temperatures BEFORE the snow begins (so none of it melts), and make sure it's placed in an area that doesn't normally experience drifting. Only wipe the board off every six hours; any other clearing regimen will result in erroneous measurements. If there's a changeover from snow to rain, a snow depth measurement should be taken right when the changeover occurs so an accurate reading is obtained.

The NWS is interested in snow depth from the entire storm, but intermediate reports are greatly appreciated!!!! The Skywarn listserver is used to notify spotters about SCHEDULED intermediate reports, usually around 5AM, 5PM, and 9PM (in order to make the regular news broadcasts). To subscribe to this listserver, go to www.weather.gov/phi/skywarn/listserv.html, and follow the instructions for the MTHOLLYSKYWARN list.

Ice is another critical weather element to report. Measure the depth of the ice which has accumulated on trees limbs, bushes, etc, and report this depth to the nearest one-tenth of an inch. Ice reports are particularly helpful to the NWS since freezing rain often appears as just plain rain on the Doppler radar display.



Pertinent Spotter Info.

Basic Spotter Courses

None Scheduled at this time. Check our website (www.erh.noaa.gov/phi) for future classes, as spring approaches.

Reporting Procedures

When calling the National Weather Service, have your name and spotter ID ready. Also have an approximate time when severe event took place along with the type of severe weather. Lastly, be prompt about calling as every second counts.

Weather Trivia

The longest dry spell in Philadelphia was **29 days** set in October and November of 1874.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or submissions, please contact us via e-mail at phi.skywarn@noaa.gov.

Also, please send any changes to your address, phone, e-mail to the same location.

Advanced Spotter Courses

None Scheduled at this time. Check our website (www.erh.noaa.gov/phi) for future classes, as spring approaches.

