



Twin Cities Chapter of The American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association



November 2011 Newsletter

Volume 33, Issue 1

November 14, 2011

Editor:
Meredith A. Willems

In this Newsletter:

- We need a new Vice-President—will it be you?
- Read about a brave 19th century Iowa girl—p3
- Chapter Officer changeup—see Chapter News
- Message from our new President—p5

November Meeting—Thursday, November 17, 2011

This month's meeting will be held at **O'Donovan's Irish Pub** in downtown Minneapolis. We'll meet at **6pm for food** and beverages, and start the **meeting at 7pm**. This month's speaker will be Patrick Flow-ers of Xcel Energy who will talk about the relationship between the power industry and weather and climate.

Where: O'Donovan's Irish Pub, 700 N 1st Ave, Minneapolis, MN

Cost: Just what you want to spend on food and drink.

Chapter News

Things have been changing around this chapter! We started this year with a full slate of officers, led by Matt Friedlein as President, Matt Greisinger as Vice-President, Chris Bovitz as Secretary and Bryan Howell as Treasurer. You'll notice these names in the September minutes. Unfortunately for us (but fortunately for Matt), not long after the year started, Matt landed a new job in Chicago. We all wished him the best, and Mike Greisinger has stepped in to fill the President's shoes. This leaves us with a vacancy to fill at the Vice-President level. If you're interested in becoming a chapter officer, come to this Thursday's meeting to see what it's all about, or send an email to Mike at president@twincitiesams.org.

Many memberships are coming due this month. If yours is, please renew by coming to the meeting and paying by check in

person, or mail a check to: Twin Cities AMS/NWA, c/o Bryan Howell, 9136 15th Ave South, Bloomington, MN 55425. If you know anyone who would like to join as a new member, please direct them to the Be A Member page of the website, <http://twincitiesams.org>, where they can fill out their contact information and become a member.

Also on the Be A Member page is the Weather Forecast Contest Entry form. Scroll all the way down to the bottom to see what's on the slate for this year's contest. The winner will receive a year's free membership in the chapter. (Value: priceless!) You can also email your entries to Chris Bovitz at secretary@twincitiesams.org. Okay, okay, for those of you who don't want to visit the Be A Member page, here are the forecasts needed for the contest: (1) Total Snowfall at

Inside this issue:

September 2011 Meeting Minutes	2-3
A Look at Weather History	3-4
President's Corner	5



Twin Cities Chapter of The American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association

Chapter News (continued from page 1)

MSP Airport (nearest 0.1 inch), (2) Coldest Temperature (nearest °F), (3) Warmest Temperature (nearest °F), and (4) the tiebreaker, Greatest

Storm-total Snowfall (nearest 0.1 inch).

There are many exciting things coming up this year – science fairs, annual meetings,

workshops – so stay tuned to this newsletter, your email, and the Events page of the website.

Minutes from the September 2011 meeting

The September 2011 meeting of the Twin Cities Chapter of the American Meteorological Society and National weather Society was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on September 27, 2011. All four officers and 16 members were present.

President Matt Friedlein thanked everyone for coming, and the members introduced themselves to each other. Secretary Chris Bovitz summarized the activities of the May meeting. Treasurer Bryan Howell talked about the chapter finances. We have about \$385 to start the year after umbrellas and radios were ordered.

Friedlein reviewed the chapter website, highlighting information useful for chapter members.

Friedlein mentioned future activities in which the chapter might participate. Scout Day is October 15 at the WFO. If members are interested, they should contact Matt Friedlein or Michelle Margraf. The Eagle River District of the Boy Scouts would like some help with weather activities on November 5.

We anticipate participating in next spring's science fairs. Friedlein urged the members to consider being a judge.

The Aberdeen WFO will host next year's Northern Plains Convective Workshop in May. They have asked us to help by collecting registration fees. It looks likely that we'll do that.

Friedlein talked about the benefits of being a member of the American Meteorological Society and the National Weather Association. Member Diane Cooper, who sits on two NWA committees, said that next year's NWA national meeting will be in Madison in October. She also mentioned that at this year's meeting, an on-line town hall meeting will take place to discuss this spring's tornadoes in Alabama.

For future speakers, we might be able to get Byron Paulson, who was the NWS's incident meteorologist. This summer and fall, he helped firefighting efforts by providing forecasts for the firefighters in the Boundary Waters. Other ideas for speakers were raised. The members were urged to send ideas for speakers to the officers at :

officers@twincitiesams.org.

The attendees were reminded that their membership dues are good for a 12-month period. If one's membership is not yet up for renewal, the dues will extend their membership. Howell mentioned that he asked someone to create a PHP form for the website to accept dues via PayPal.

Due to the president's, vice president's, and treasurer's work schedules, the chapter will use the third week of the month as its basis for meetings. This will not require a change in the bylaws.

The business meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Friedlein led a discussion, via a presentation, of the National Weather Service's (NWS) service assessment for the Joplin tornado of May 22, 2011. This was an active year with 1,784 confirmed tornadoes through May (an average year has 1,469); six of them were EF5s (there have been two F-5 and EF-5s in the past 10 years). This was the fourth deadliest year since

"This was an active year with 1784 confirmed tornadoes.

This was the fourth deadliest tornado year since 1950."

Volume 33, Issue 1



A Look at Weather History: Kate Shelley, July 6, 1881

The Des Moines River runs from southwestern Minnesota and across central Iowa, winding along until it meets the Mississippi River in the southeast corner of Iowa. Many smaller streams empty into the Des Moines River, and because central Iowa is relatively flat, it doesn't take an epic rain event to push one of these streams into its flood stage.

Kate Shelley's family emigrated to the United States from Ireland and settled down on a farm in Iowa between Moingona and Boone.¹ The family's house happened to be near a railroad trestle that stretched across Honey Creek, one of the Des Moines River's minor tributaries. Kate's father found work with the Chicago & North Western Railroad, but he died in an accident when Kate was 12.^{1,2} Not long afterwards, the family's oldest son drowned

while swimming in the Des Moines River. The health of Kate's mother began to degrade after these two events, and Kate essentially became the head of the household and watched over the farm and her three younger siblings, even though she was still in her mid-teens.

The week leading up to July 6 had seen lots of rain in the areas surrounding the Shelley residence.^{1,2} On that Wednesday afternoon, another round of thunderstorms approached the Moingona area from the west, and with it, the waters in Honey Creek quickly began to rise. The Shelleys were forced to set free several farm animals that resided in a barn built near to the creek. By the time they returned to the house, the Shelleys could hear trees being uprooted by the storm's strong winds.

After 11 p.m. that night, the storm was still raging, and to the family's surprise, they could hear a train approaching the bridge over Honey Creek from the west. Moments later, a horrendous noise was heard. It was obvious to the family that the bridge had collapsed, and the train had fallen into the creek. Kate's immediate response (despite her mother's objections, at first) was to run to the creek and look for survivors. She grabbed one of her father's railroad lanterns and filled it with oil. Because she couldn't find any wicks to light the oil, she ripped a piece of cloth from an old flannel shirt to light a flame.

When Kate reached the scene of the accident, she spotted two men in the creek, both of whom were clinging to tree branches. Two other men had already been swept away and died in the accident. Kate

Minutes from the September 2011 meeting (continued)

1950. Twelve of the tornadoes this year were in major cities.

This assessment was conducted a little differently than past ones: The public was interviewed to determine their perception of warnings and the danger they represented. Many people didn't take shelter at the first risk based on past experiences or the need to get more

information. They did often seek shelter when they received confirmation from another non-routine, extraordinary source.

Polygonal warnings presented problems in a county-based warning system. People's experiences with over-warnings during this event and in the past were cited as a reason for shelter not being

taken immediately, along with the incorrect self-assessment of their own risk from the storms.

A better warning system, coordinating with partners, and outreach and planning were all cited as recommendations.

-Chris Bovitz

"Many people didn't take shelter at the first risk based on past experiences or the need to get more information."



Twin Cities Chapter of The American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association

A Look at Weather History: Kate Shelley, July 6, 1881 (continued)

“Kate proceeded to cross this mile-long bridge in the dark, on her hands and knees, all the while knowing how her brother had drowned nearby.”

could do nothing for these men at the moment, at least by herself.

Knowing that a 200-passenger train would be coming down the same tracks about midnight from the west, Kate felt compelled to get to the telegraph station in Moingona. To accomplish this feat in time, Kate had to cross over a high bridge that spanned the Des Moines River. To discourage people from crossing this railway bridge on foot, the railroad had left large gaps in between the railroad ties. Before Kate even reached the bridge, her lantern went out, and she was unable to relight it. Kate proceeded to cross this mile-long bridge in the dark, on her hands and knees,

all the while knowing how her brother had drowned nearby. Eventually, Kate felt the earth beneath her again, and then she ran the last half mile to the Moingona telegraph office.

A message was sent out to halt the oncoming passenger train, but word was also sent out for volunteers to save the men in Honey Creek. Kate rode on another train back to the river with several rescuers. Once there, she led them to the spot where the two men were in the water. By the time the two men were safe again, dawn was starting to break, and the rain was finally coming to an end.

Kate was ill for about three months after the ordeal, but as

a reward for her deed, she was given a lifetime pass to ride the railroad. Yet today, a double-tracked railroad bridge that spans the Des Moines River near Boone, Iowa bears her name. It is currently the highest double-track railway trestle in the U.S., and it has a pedestrian path built into it.

-Anthony Stender

Sources:

1. “The Kate Shelley Story” by IGenWeb of Boone County, Iowa. Retrieved from the web at: <http://iagenweb.org/boone/history/kateshelley.htm> on 8/31/2011.
2. San Souci, R.D. Kate Shelley, bound for legend. Penguin Books, New York, NY. 1995.

2011-2012 Weather Forecasting Contest

Yes, Folks, it’s time for the annual Weather Forecast Contest. Just in case you missed the emails, and the mention in Chapter News on Page 1, here are the details again:

- 1) Total Snowfall at MSP Airport (nearest 0.1 inches) : _____
- 2) Coldest Temp (nearest °F): _____
- 3) Warmest Temp (nearest °F): _____
- 4) Greatest Storm Total Snowfall (nearest 0.1 inches): _____

You can email your entry to Chris Bovitz at: secretary@twincitiesams.org. You can enter it on the website. You can even print this out, fill it in, and bring it to a meeting or mail it to Bryan (with your dues, of course!).





President's Corner

Hello all, and welcome to our much anticipated first newsletter of the 2011-2012 chapter year! It has been a tumultuous first couple of months (for the officers of the chapter at least), as the president at the start of the year, Matt Friedlein has moved off on to a new road in his career down in Chicago. I'll let you read on in the rest of the newsletter to see the details in all of this change, but to make a long story short, I assumed the role of president at our October meeting. Given this is the first "Presidents Corner" with me as President; I thought I would take this opportunity to give you a little info on where I've been.

I have been a forecaster at the National Weather Service here in Chanhassen since January of 2009. I started my career in the weather service back in September of 2006 as a met intern at the forecast office in Peachtree City, GA (Atlanta office). I received a B.S. in meteorology from the Central Michigan University in 2004 and an M.S. in atmospheric science from Texas Tech in 2006, where I studied the initiation of thunderstorms along the west Texas dryline.

I was a member of the local chapters of the AMS at all three of these locations, including a stint as VP of the SCAMS at CMU (student chapter of the AMS...we leapt all over that acronym

opportunity!). Before beginning my meteorology adventure, I grew up in St. Joseph, MI. That should be enough about me!

I am very excited to have this great opportunity to lead a group that has such a long and rich history here in the Twin Cities and look forward to leading us into the AMS/NWA era. I will always be open to comments and suggestions and encourage you to send me an email at : president@twincitiesams.org or talk to me at a meeting if you have ideas on potential presenters for future meeting or even how you think we could do things.

Finally, if you would like to be more involved with where this

chapter goes in the future (more than just sending me an occasional email!), there is a great opportunity for you! By assuming the presidency, I have created an opening at the VP position, a perfect way for someone that has wanted to do more with the chapter to do exactly that!

We would like to fill this position by/at our January meeting, so if you are one of those with an itch to do more, please consider running for the VP position. Thanks and hopefully I'll see you at the November meeting!

-Mike Griesinger

"If you are one of those with an itch to do more, please consider running for the VP position."

