Kelly Savoie (00:00):

Hello, Clear Skies Ahead listeners. This is Kelly Savoie, and I'm hoping you can take a moment of your time to rate and review our show wherever you listen to podcasts. We have produced over 100 episodes and you can help us reach even more individuals that will benefit from the diverse experiences shared by our guests. Thanks so much for listening, and I hope you enjoy this new episode.

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations About Careers in Meteorology and Beyond. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Emma Collins, and we'll be your hosts. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Emma Collins (00:53):

We're happy to introduce today's guest, Alex Tomoff, lead meteorologist and commodity manager at Mars in Toledo, Ohio. Welcome, Alex. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Alex Tomoff (01:02):

Thanks, Emma. Thanks, Kelly. Great to be on the show with you guys.

Kelly Savoie (01:05):

Alex, could you tell us a little bit about what sparked your interest in meteorology and how it influenced your educational path?

Alex Tomoff (01:12):

Yeah, I've always been interested in sciences since a pretty young age, but my interest in weather, it's a very specific event, goes back to the 2004 hurricane season. Actually, if you remember the first name of that hurricane season was Alex. It's a storm that went up the East Coast, never made landfall, but came pretty close to the Outer Banks. And one of my friends, it was one of the first days back to school, and she told me how her family had to leave the Outer Banks early from their vacation. They had to evacuate. I think they were just voluntary evacuations, but they ended up leaving their vacation early and I remember her telling me about that on the bus ride back to school. And I just thought that was interesting. Turned on the Weather Channel, I believe, at one point, getting home from school that day and learned all about the storm.

(01:57):

And I think that's where my interest in hurricanes and tropical meteorology came from.

Kelly Savoie (02:01):

And so did you realize at that point that you could go to school and get a degree in meteorology, or did you learn about that after the fact and then start pursuing it?

Alex Tomoff (02:11):

Right. So I never really thought you could go to school to be a meteorologist at that point. In fact, I was definitely afraid of doing live television since that was the only thing I thought you could do with a meteorology degree would be doing broadcast weather. But as I got older and I started looking for universities, different degrees I could pursue, meteorology is one that came up. It was probably going to be that or engineering, actually. That was probably the top two things I was thinking about in high school, but I ended up finding a real passion for weather and I think the different opportunities that arose there sparked my interest even more.

Kelly Savoie (02:45):

And where did you end up going to school?

Alex Tomoff (02:47):

So I did my undergraduate studies at Penn State University, and then I followed that up with my master's graduate program at University of Albany in New York.

Emma Collins (02:56):

And what opportunities did you pursue that you knew would be beneficial to securing a job in your profession?

Alex Tomoff (03:01):

So one of the things, and it's actually AMS centric that really, I think, sparked my academic career in meteorology, something that motivated me to pursue weather and potentially find a good opportunity there was the AMS freshman undergraduate scholarship. I'm not sure if that's still something that's offered through the AMS, but it's something I did when I was in high school as a senior. I did a course project in my mathematics class and tied that to the essay for that scholarship. I ended up receiving it. And it was something that gave me a bit more flexibility for pursuing my coursework at Penn State. It was an out- of-state tuition. I'm from Ohio, and so certainly there's any kind of funding would be helpful there. So I think that kind of opportunity from a monetary standpoint, and with the help of the AMS being there from the very beginning of my time of going into the field of meteorology, I think that helped greatly.

(03:53):

Beyond that, just trying to take as many classes that follow that very rigorous STEM coursework that you might be following along as your meteorology degree progresses. I took a summer class after high school in programming, specifically in Python. That was something I look back on as being, I think, very pivotal to helping me understand the computer science component of this field. It's becoming increasingly, I think, necessary to understand and to have a lot of flexibility in the workforce. I was part of the honors college at Penn State, something else I think that opened up a lot of different doors for me and something I didn't really recognize at the time when I started, but being able to write a thesis, work on academic writing, scientific writing in my undergraduate time was very valuable. Doing extra projects in some of my other

courses tied to the honors curriculum was very critical, I think, as well for different opportunities that came up in my career.

(04:50):

And then lastly, I think one of the biggest things, another great program to pursue was the NOAA Hollings scholarship. That was another one that gave me a lot of that background in the public sector. I should probably preface, it's really important, I think, to have a breadth of experience through both the academic and the public sector as well as the private sector, if you can get that opportunity, which I think we'll speak a little bit more about later here in this interview. But having that really good background in the public and private sector in my time in undergrad was, I think, what helped set me apart a bit trying to pursue a degree in meteorology and the different types of jobs that became available later, that was something I look back on as being really important.

Kelly Savoie (05:35):

And so when you graduated, did you have a clear idea of what type of sector that you wanted to go into? Tell us a little bit about what your first job was in the field, how you got it, and how you ended up at Mars.

Alex Tomoff (05:49):

Yeah. So that was one thing I really had no idea what I wanted to do yet with my degree in meteorology. I just knew I loved forecasting and being out in the field. I loved to go storm chasing with friends, things like that, but I never really knew exactly what I wanted to do with this job. I felt very comfortable doing, like I said, the scientific writing, doing the thesis. So the research part of it, I think I became more comfortable with, and that's what motivated me to want to pursue my master's degree at Albany. I said, "Well, I'm already pretty good at the classes and doing research, so why not continue that and really build upon those skills?" But actually my first job in meteorology was back at Penn State University. I was a tower worker, an observer for the department. I got to go out in the morning and take the temperature reading and for the co-op site there.

(06:37):

So that was a really cool job just to be able to do actual measurements for the department there at the state college weather observing site at University Park, I should say. That's where I also learned how to use the sling psychrometer. That was also something I didn't think I'd learn how to do.

Kelly Savoie:

Whoa.

Alex Tomoff:

So yes.

Kelly Savoie (06:55):

What is that? What's a sling psychrometer?

Alex Tomoff (06:58):

Yeah, yeah. So that's a way to measure moisture in the atmosphere. You have two different mercury thermometers, bulb thermometers, and one of them has a wet sock at the end of it, a little piece of cloth at the end, and you spin it around. And by doing that, you evaporate the water off of that sock and the temperature will decrease. It's basically comparing that to the dry bulb too. You can then say how much the air was able to cool the thermometer, the bulb there via evaporation of that water. So you can get things about basically the wet bulb temperature and the wet bulb depression, the difference between those two. It gives you ideas about moisture variables, which can be useful for a lot of forecasting needs, right? So that was cool to be able to actually learn that. Did a bunch of other work, doing a bit of forecasting for some clients there at the department.

(07:44):

So really good experience there working on the show Weather World as well, which was a PBS television program they still do at the department. So I got to even learn a bit about broadcast, something I said I was definitely afraid of doing, but I was able to work behind the scenes there and see how it's done. I think that helped a lot with communications and just seeing other meteorologists speak in front of a camera. So very valuable just to kind of get that experience too. But yeah, I guess if you wanted to know more about beyond just undergraduate jobs in meteorology, like I said, I did end up going to grad school. I was looking for other jobs before that. I ended up kind of continuing my research for a couple years at Albany. I studied the Madden-Julian Oscillation. And then after that is where I started to look for my first real job, I should say, outside of university.

(08:36):

My first job was at the Climate Forecast Applications Network. That was right when COVID began. And in March of 2020, I applied for that job and I accepted an offer there to join them. Small group based near Atlanta and they do a lot of hurricane related product development, working for some private sector companies, namely mostly in insurance and energy companies there that are affected by hurricanes and severe weather. So I was doing a lot of work for them for about a year or so related to that kind of tropical, severe weather area. And then after that is where I ended up working, finding an opportunity to join Mars to have my current role here as the meteorologist and commodity manager. So I'm sure we'll spend a bit of time talking a bit about that.

Emma Collins (09:25):

Yes, we have to know. Can you describe what a typical day on the job is like at the world's leading manufacturer in chocolate?

Alex Tomoff (09:32):

Yeah. I always get the question of why does a candy company need to have a meteorologist? And it's one of my favorite questions, but it's really important to have an understanding of weather and climate risk in a large company, especially in an agricultural based company, one that's in the food industry, buying a lot of raw ingredients that ultimately are affected by different weather patterns and climate patterns. Anything that we're buying that grows out in a field somewhere around the world, various farms that we're buying from across many different countries and origins, it's really, it's very necessary to be able to understand those commodity markets, to make the right buying plan decisions, to be able to avoid risk to the business from whether it's price risk or quality risk. I'm always trying to provide those weather and climate insights to get ahead of what other people are seeing in those markets so we can act at the right time to secure business integrity and safety, quality, all of those things throughout different important times of the year when that comes up.

Kelly Savoie (10:46):

And do you do any field work for that? Or what is the specific duties of your job? Is it more computer work and forecasting or do you actually get to go to places where they're growing chocolate to see what the conditions are like?

Alex Tomoff (11:02):

Yeah. A lot of my work is behind the desk doing a lot of forecasting, research projects, product development, different types of tools we're trying to build, to understand these markets better. Finding different relationships between variables, things that a lot of meteorologists I think can relate to. But a lot of my work, well, some of my work too, it does involve being out in the field. And I do get to go see some of the origins that we're buying from, meet some of the suppliers, get to understand the supply chain process better so that I can understand where weather is critical during that process and just to be able to understand that supply network better. So there's certainly times where I get to go out. I was just in Argentina last month visiting some peanut suppliers. That was quite a journey. We had to fly into Buenos Aires and then we had to take another flight from there to Cordoba, just another province just west of there.

(11:52):

And that's where all the peanuts are mostly grown in Argentina. Just a small province relatively, I'd say about the size of Indiana, the state of Indiana, I think, about the square acreage is similar to that where the peanuts are grown there. So it's a large area, I suppose, but compared to the whole country, it's a very small part where they're growing peanuts. And Argentina is unique in that it supplies mostly for Europe. So that's why we're watching that to see when Europe wants to buy their peanuts, they can have a good crop ready from Argentina. And if there are any kind of crop issues that pop up, ideally we can see when that might be coming.

Kelly Savoie (12:30):

And cocoa beans is what the chocolate is made of. What conditions? I don't know much about it. Is it like, dry? It has to be dry? What are the conditions for the best growth?

Alex Tomoff (12:43):

Yeah. For cocoa, we're mostly looking at West Africa and the countries of Ghana and Corte Lavar or Ivory Coast just near the Gulf of Guinea there. That's where about 70% of the world's cocoa is grown. And so it's a very tropical climate there. The weather and climate is heavily modulated by the inner tropical convergence zone, so the monsoon there, that moves north and south depending on the time of year. This time of year, they're about to enter their wet season when they get kind of an onset of heavier rains that are needed to keep the trees healthy. They need lots of rain, I think upwards of 1500 millimeters, usually per year or more. In order to survive and be healthy, they need lots of sunlight as well so that photosynthesis can take place. Humid air, they need warm temperatures, but not too warm. If you start to get above like 33, 35 Celsius, you'll start to get some heat stress on the trees.

(13:32):

So they like being in the mid upper 20s Celsius or generally like in the upper 80s Fahrenheit, that's a very good climate zone for them. But it's a very, very fragile tree at the end of the day. If they start to see climate change trends that start to push them out of that temperate range that they're used to, then you start to see things like yield loss, disease pressure, some insect damage can start to occur, especially if it gets hot out, that can be a big problem. All sorts of issues can start to develop once those weather variables start to become unfavorable.

Kelly Savoie (14:06):

Yeah, we don't want any issues. Chocolate is like my kryptonite. I can't imagine a world without chocolate. I just have one more question about this Mars position. How did you find out about this job? It's not something that I would think that you would think they'd hire meteorologists. Did you know somebody who worked there who gave you a heads up?

Alex Tomoff (14:29):

Yeah. So back at my time at Penn State, we have a club there called the Weather Risk Management Club, and there's also a degree option within the meteorology degree called the weather risk option of the meteorology degree there. And through that, especially through the club, I was able to meet who would become my future manager. She was already the manager of the team I later joined. She visited, came back to university to teach about what she does at Mars using her weather insights and background there to work in the agricultural soft commodity space, helping a large CPG company like Mars. And I was able to meet her and talk to her a bit. We actually set up another visit to go see the Hackettstown office in New Jersey. So we got to go see them on site too. And I think just developed a good relationship there.

(15:22):

I eventually, the first time I applied for that role, I actually did not get it, but it was something I still kept in the back of my mind. This was before I had my master's degree too. And I knew that getting that master's degree was probably necessary to have that extra flexibility in my resume, I think, to open up different job opportunities. But once I did have that master's under my belt, I was, I think, able to be more competitive for that role when it came back and opened up again. I think that was in 2021 in the summer that year I applied again.

Kelly Savoie (15:56):

Nice. What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced as an early career professional? I know it must be difficult, you want to prove yourself. How have you handled it?

Alex Tomoff (16:10):

Yeah. From just a weather specific standpoint, learning the weather and climate patterns around the world is something that I think is pretty challenging. A lot of my colleagues I think, too, end up forecasting for places they've never forecasted before, but we use the same skillsets that we've learned to do a lot of the local forecasting we do. You learn that geography and that climate and you start to become kind of the local expert in that yourself. So that's something, but looking across the whole globe, if anything is grown anywhere, we're probably looking at it. So pretty much everywhere, Antarctica, and even then I'm looking at certain patterns over the Antarctic too, to see what's going on in the Southern hemisphere. But really just forecasting all across the globe can be pretty challenging trying to kind of juggle all these different things going on, but it helps tell the full story when you're aware of everything that's going on.

(16:55):

So it's important to have a very global mindset when you're doing this job. On top of the weather, there's always other things beyond the weather that can be a factor in this job. So we're not looking at just the weather impacts to the market, but we're looking at all the macroeconomic trends that we're seeing, geopolitical risk. A lot of those things start to play in. Sometimes weather can be even involved in that too. So it's a very dynamic system and market that we're trying to model and understand, so it can be pretty challenging there. And there's the communication of all that too. I have some fellow science oriented minds on my research team, people who kind of understand these things really well and can speak that fluently to each other, but trying to talk to some of the leadership in the company or to other stakeholders, some of the buying managers, trying to make sure that we're all on the same page and that they fully understand all the risk on the table.

(17:46):

Making sure that we're communicating these things effectively is certainly another thing that can be challenging. The biggest thing I'm always trying to ask myself is what is the ‘so what’ of whatever I'm saying? What is the reason when we say something, what is the expected response that we want to see or what should be the reaction and what kind of next step should we be taking based on the analysis that we're doing?

Emma Collins (18:10):

And you mentioned that you forecast all over the globe. So is that a very collaborative process as well? Are you communicating with people outside of the US and things on a regular basis or is it mostly just you and your team?

Alex Tomoff (18:21):

Yeah, that's a good question. So Mars is an international company. We are based here in North America, but we also have presence across the rest of the world too. And we have different

headquarters across the globe. So it's important to keep in touch with them. And I have a lot of calls throughout different times of the day. It can be an early call in the morning to talk to those stakeholders or it could be later in the day too, just kind of trying to align the time zone differences as best as we can. So yeah, just definitely a lot of communication across the globe to understand the weather impact.

Emma Collins (18:54):

So can you tell us a little bit about the outreach and volunteer services you've been engaged in and whether they were beneficial in finding employment?

Alex Tomoff (19:02):

Yeah. I think one of the…the thing I look back at the most in my career just in my time of trying to get experience in the field of meteorology, I think the one thing that goes back even before then that has helped shape my ability to succeed in this industry is my tutoring experience and being able to teach a bit. I've served as a tutor going back to high school. I was a peer tutor. I would help after school, help kids with other students with their coursework, whether that be physics or chemistry. It was something I was able to succeed in, in being able to help others learn. And that's something I still do today in my current job, but I kept doing that through college. I took my passion for sports as well and combined it with the tutoring. I helped tutor student athletes when I was at Penn State.

(19:53):

That was a really unique and great experience. Helped me also stay on top of some of my other coursework. So maybe you had an introduction to chemistry class that you took your first semester, but then maybe two years later, you're still tutoring it. So you remember a lot of these things that maybe you would forget. Helped...I think it's, once you can teach something, you really know something, you've really learned it then. And I found that that was the case with a lot of the work I was doing through the tutoring program. Those classes I was helping tutor and I really learned those things. It helped me communicate too, to different people who learned in different ways, whether it was one-on-one or in a group setting, I think that was really valuable experience. So then continuing through graduate school, helping tutor the undergrads at Albany was another thing, helped me kind of go back to the basics in meteorology too, the dynamics classes, your thermodynamics, synoptic, kind of keeping up with all of that too, was I think really, really important.

Kelly Savoie (20:47):

You participated in a Cornell theme park entrepreneur contest. We definitely need to hear more about that. That sounds really fun.

Alex Tomoff (20:56):

Yeah, I totally forgot that was still on my LinkedIn profile, but it's something I haven't been asked about in a long time, but it's something I remember really fondly. Back at Penn State University, one of my clubs that I was a part of was the theme park engineering group. I think

it's actually theme park engineering and entertainment group now since they broadened it to be more than just engineering. There's a lot of people who are interested in working in the amusement park, theme park space, entertainment in general. So they kind of opened it up a bit. Some people go on to work in places like Broadway or hotel management, things like that. It's all part of that kind of experience in vacations and leisure hospitality. But anyway, one of the things I did was I took part of a competition, which was hosted by University of Cornell.

(21:39):

And the objective that year of this project, we were competing against other student groups across the country, was to reopen the theme park in Ohio called Geauga Lake, which closed back in 2007. I went there the closing year. I was very sad as a kid back then. One of my local theme parks near Cleveland, Ohio there where I grew up. A lot of history at that park and a really nice park located on the lake and Geauga Lake there. What Cornell did was try to create a plan, a financial plan and an actual draft of a park to redesign it and to try to reopen it. And so what I did is I worked with one of the other students in that group. We designed a new rollercoaster as a central attraction to the reopening of that park and another one. And then we all worked together on the budget and the finances there to see how that logistically would work.

(22:29):

So it kind of gave a cool kind of business component too to not just ... I have a passion, like I said, for engineering. And one of my hobbies is actually, I am a rollercoaster enthusiast, so I love to visit theme parks. So it took a lot of those hobbies together and kind of helped build a project that actually really meant something I think personally there too.

Kelly Savoie (22:47):

Too bad you couldn't just send it to them and be like, "Please reopen. Look, these are great plans."

Alex Tomoff (22:53):

Oh, I wish. I wish.

Emma Collins (22:55):

Could you talk about some of the other non-traditional career opportunities that meteorology students might consider pursuing? Like you said, you're like, "Oh, I very first heard of meteorology and I thought I had to be a weatherman, but it turns out there's a lot more to it. "

Alex Tomoff (23:07):

Yeah. One of the career fields I've seen with the non-traditional career fields that I've really just have a great respect for and kind of just in awe of people who are in this part of it is aviation, sorry, well, aviation too. I meant to say space weather with space weather specifically. And I've seen one of my friends who was actually, I think one of the videos for the Artemis launch, she was helping do some of the work there and making sure the research was in place on the space weather side of things for that mission to go smoothly. She was a part of that whole process

too. So people don't realize there's meteorologists helping make those kind of projects at NASA go well. People who work who actually help with the launching, making sure the weather is good for the actual launch is really just fascinating stuff.

(24:02):

And I look at my job and there's a lot of money on the table. If you get something wrong, there's a lot of money at stake there. But when you're talking about rocket launches, the go or no go decision there, that's pretty stressful stuff. But I have really big respect for people who work in space weather. It's a really important area of a non-traditional field in meteorology. I mentioned aviation weather too, making sure that our flight traffic works every day and keeps us safe too, rerouting planes if needed, trying to get things in the right place to avoid large traffic issues and air traffic. Energy trading is another really big one that I think is really cool. I do a little bit of weather forecasting for the energy commodities at Mars, but not nearly as much as if you actually find a role working in the energy markets, trying to forecast things for wind and solar for renewable energy production, how hot it's going to be or cold it is, depending how much energy might be used on the grid each day.

(24:57):

Some others. Another one I found really cool is forensic meteorology. That's a very niche one, but actually being able to present arguments in court about how weather might have affected an outcome of something, being able to prove that to get the facts right about the weather, I think is really cool. But yeah, plenty of different opportunities and certainly mine is also very nontraditional in some ways being an agricultural meteorology. It's not one I know too many people doing, but it is also very important to make sure we have good food supplies out there, keep our prices as low as we can. Businesses are always trying to mitigate those costs that are associated with weather and climate risk. So it's important, especially in the food industry, to be aware of these risks and also adapt them, do research to be able to have more of a sustainability initiative to try to prepare for any kind of future risk that's out there too.

Kelly Savoie (25:48):

And for our student listeners, in your experience, what are some opportunities, coursework that they should focus on to prepare for jobs in the private sector?

Alex Tomoff (25:59):

Yeah. So like I said, I actually hope most of my work I did as an undergrad was in the public and the research, the academic sector, but I still found those fields really useful for what I do now. Just having that ability to communicate complicated information to a number of different audiences is important. So keep doing your science courses. And if you get a chance to do any kind of writing or projects in your classes, you can always ask a professor, "Hey, I'm really interested in this subject. Is there something you want me to do for you in your research?" Just a side thing to help out. Or if they just had a question on their mind they want to answer and you might be able to help them, I think they would be glad to have a student helping out and just kind of some volunteer type work like that in your own coursework.

(26:45):

Certainly reach out to alumni or other professionals if you see them on LinkedIn or you hear them on a podcast like this or certainly any area that you see them. I think people would love to talk to you just to give you advice on where to go in your field, what you're currently looking at and what kind of things you should be thinking about doing in the future. I think there's always people that want to help. One way that you can get involved, I think in the private sector, just gaining some of my experience right away is through the American Meteorological Society's Board of Private Sector Meteorologist internship program. So I have two students I'm working with this year that they're going to shadow me throughout the year and I'll help give them an idea of what I do, but also guide them through their kind of early career decisions, maybe give them some projects to work on, just giving them as much experience as possible.

(27:35):

Things that I wish I had when I was an undergrad, just kind of hands-on experience, getting to see what people actually do in the real world with weather data and knowledge.

Kelly Savoie (27:46):

Yeah. And you were describing to us how you started preparing pretty early, like even in high school taking programming courses and things like that. So I guess it's never too early to start preparation for things like that if you feel like maybe this is a career that you want to pursue.

Alex Tomoff (28:04):

Yeah. I think the ability to learn now is, I could argue, easier than it's ever been before. As long as you have the passion to want to learn how to do something, I do that every day at my work. I always come up with a question and I have to solve something, right? Questions I've never even thought about before, but it's always that challenge to want to learn more. And I think if you have that, you've got to start somewhere. I knew nothing about computer science and programming when I first took that class and it was, in my opinion, one of the hardest classes I've ever taken, a summer class on computer programming. But I look back at that and I say, it's almost silly looking back at how hard I thought it was back then. But like I said, you got to start somewhere.

(28:44):

And I think if you just go into it with an open mind and say, "I'm going to get better at this and really push yourself." You have a lot of people who are there to help you too in these things, and there's really cool ways to apply your passion for something. So just I would say keep that effort up on whatever interests you and always ask questions, be open to all the different possibilities out there.

Kelly Savoie (29:07):

And Emma and I can attest to the fact that there's a recurrent theme in these podcasts about how important it is being able to write and to communicate to audiences. So public speaking courses and things where you can present and just write, just in general, technical writing or regular writing sounds like it's very, very important no matter what field you're in.

Alex Tomoff (29:35):

Yeah. Most of my initial passion for writing ended up, it was more from my high school English and film classes that I took. It got me interested a bit more in the language arts, but learning how to use some of those skills I learned there and apply it to scientific writing, it's a very different approach certainly. And I think those skills are really useful, like you said, across any area that you end up in meteorology or any career that you might end up following. Everyone has very interesting career paths. A lot of meteorologists don't stay in meteorology. A lot of people I know want to come back to meteorology who have been working, even in my company, I've had a few people come to me saying, "Hey, I want to go to school for meteorology. This sounds really cool what you're doing." But they always have that ability to communicate and to write really effectively.

(30:18):

So that's a good foundation for anywhere that you might end up.

Emma Collins (30:21):

Well, Alex, we're so grateful for everything you've told us about your career. However, before you go, we always ask our guests one last fun question at the end of our show. So what is your favorite band?

Alex Tomoff (30:31):

Yeah, so I love music. It's another one of my hobbies of sorts, just listening to all sorts of different types of music. But one of my favorite bands from going back to really my early days of getting interested in meteorology, arguably, one of my favorite bands is Florence + The Machine. And so I'll be seeing them next week in Detroit. They'll be live there Monday. And it's kind of a funny story about that actually. Goes back to the AMS conference in Houston this year. I met some of the students, part of the executive board of University of Michigan's AMS chapter. And then I set up a time to visit them in April. We were thinking about me coming to visit to talk to them in April for some of the students that didn't get to come to the conference. I was going to go talk to them about some of the similar things I talked about at some of the non-traditional career panels at AMS.

(31:18):

I'm going to also do a bit of a more of a hands-on demonstration in agricultural commodity training too with them. But one of those students who invited me to come talk to them, I was setting up the date and time for this. And I had mentioned, "Well, I'm already going to be up in Michigan on Monday. So I'm going to be going to the Florence + The Machine concert, so maybe I can just come in on Monday afternoon to talk to you guys." He's like, "Yeah, that will work." And he's like, "Oh, what a great taste in music. Florence + The Machine, my sister loves her too." And I said, "Well, I have two extra tickets if you want them." I had bought four tickets. My partner and I are going, but I had two others. I was expecting a couple others to be able to go, but they hadn't been able to.

(31:57):

Their schedules just didn't work out. Said, "Well, there's two tickets if you want to take them, they're yours." And he's like, "Oh my gosh." So we're all going to see Florence together on Monday.

Kelly Savoie (32:07):

That's great.

Emma Collins (32:10):

I'm so envious. That's one of my favorite bands. That's amazing. That's so cool. Do you have a favorite song?

Alex Tomoff (32:17):

Ooh, from Florence? I would say Cosmic Love is the first song ever heard by her before Dog Days Are Over, which is the one everyone knows. But that's probably my first favorite of hers, but lots of others across her different albums, I like too.

Kelly Savoie (32:31):

Well, thanks so much for joining us, Alex, and sharing your work experiences with us.

Alex Tomoff (32:35):

Yeah, thanks for having me again. It was a really great experience to be able to talk to you guys and hopefully help out people who are also looking along their career journey in meteorology.

Emma Collins (32:44):

Well, that's our show for today. Please join us next time, Rain or Shine.

Kelly Savoie (32:48):

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is edited by Johnny Lay. Technical Direction is provided by Peter Killelea. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie, and the show is hosted by Emma Collins and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at www.ametsoc.org/clearskies, and you can contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org If you have any feedback or would like to become a future guest.