

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

August 12, 2016
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL WEST, LAKEWOOD, CO

“The lifeguards hadn’t blown their whistles yet. We started to pack up, and I actually took a picture of the sky, and as I was taking a picture of the sky, all of a sudden, it felt kind of like a hammer, an axe, like, hit our heads, and my husband and I just blacked out.”. A witness recalling a lightning strike in Long Beach, NY. Source: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/07/15/5-beachgoers-injured-when-lightning-strikes-ground-in-long-beach/>

1. Members Present: Clark, Yarnell, Wachtel, Elder, Claus, Nibbe, Patrick, Gift, Cui-Gift, Langford, Heit, Stuart, a Survivor, and Swanson. Meeting began at 11:45 AM and ended at 1:10 PM. Clark moderated.
2. Steve Clark announced starting with January's meeting, we will meet in Conference Rooms E&F for the whole year.
3. One of our members is working to promote lightning safety in her local area. Several entities within the area have expressed interest in attending a lightning presentation in their area, such as: first responders, search and rescue, fire departments, EMS, law enforcement, construction workers and local citizens. The local fire department has expressed an interest in having LDC give a presentation in 2017 on lightning as part of a larger lightning-related CME course for eligible members of the community. Steve Clark will work with the member and the fire department on getting this done.
4. We had a telephone conversation with a survivor that was struck 6 times over 30 years. The most recent strike occurred earlier this year. She was seated at a dining room table with metal legs at a seaside home along the eastern coast of the United States. Lightning had struck nearby and she was shocked on her leg where it was in contact with the table leg. She received a burn on the leg where it had been in contact with the table leg. There were seven other people present and none of them reported being shocked. Her symptoms included: feeling "pins and needles", periodic "heart attacks", selective memory issues including the wiping away of recollection of mathematics (a skill she was previously competent with). However, her general communication skills were good, with superb recall of medical history and responsiveness to questions. On the “heart attack episodes, she said there have been four such episodes following the strike. Pain originates in the sternum and migrates upward toward the jaws and teeth. The survivor who spoke earlier also noted similar episodes, but they tend to originate at the extremities and moved inward towards the core of her body.

Dental – One of her six strikes hit her on the nose and upper lip while she was talking on a cell phone. A cyst developed at the gum line, along with bleeding and tissue damage. One of the two front teeth suffered sufficient damage where it has needed to be repeatedly worked on over multiple appointments, most recently last week. One attendee commented that her mouth issue was related to teeth, where the "...tarter turned to cement".

She suffers with chronic pain from her injuries and finds relief with a strong narcotic drug. Thanks to the drug, she says she is: "...able to function like a normal person."

Her eardrum had been pierced. This wasn't properly treated until she had a successful procedure in Colorado.

Medical care - She said the first doctor she saw was awful. He said she could not have been struck by lightning. "If she was struck by lightning, she'd be dead."

Emotional Effects - Those near her said she looked fine, but "I suffered inside so much." Greg Stewart asked whether the Lightning Strike and Electric Shock Survivors International (LSESSI) group was helpful to her. She said the group made a profound difference in her life. "This organization...these people UNDERSTOOD." The reason, overall, for her doing okay, was in her words: "I'm driven."

She is convinced she is a "lightning magnet".

She was asked if she had difficulty with her wrist watches failing, a correlation that had been noted in discussion with other strike survivors. Her response was no, though she was aware of the complaint. Personal note: it was very gratifying to hear two strike survivors discussing and sharing experiences.

There was interest in identifying common factors in her history of lightning strikes. Greg suggested that one obvious factor is the prolific flash rate observed in the southeastern U.S. in general. Carl Swanson asked if she could provide a written narrative for each of her six strikes to aid the search for common factors.

5. We also heard from a man who had been driving his car along a two-lane road in a semi-rural area when lightning struck in front of his car. He described the flash as being a bright bluish-white color. The flash blinded him for about 20-30 seconds. During that time, he did not know where he was or what he was doing. After about 30 seconds, he began to regain his vision and awareness and was able to safely pull his vehicle off the side of the road and collect his thoughts. There were no other medical side effects from the flash noted. This man was very fortunate in several ways: a) he was driving a convertible, 2) he stayed on the road when he was blinded, 3) it appears he was not struck, and 4) there was no apparent damage to the vehicle or any of its subsystems.
6. Questions, comments, notification of errors, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please forward those to Steve Clark at: sclarktoto@gmail.com. Please keep your communications professional and respectful. Communications will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.

7. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of the LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not implicitly or explicitly recommend or endorse any product or service. Any product or service presented in these minutes is done so for purposes of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for the consideration and review by the entire membership.
8. Next meeting: Friday, September 9, 2016 at 11:45 AM at St. Anthony Hospital West in the Pinecone Room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist

Lightning Links

This is a monthly listing of periodicals, websites, and videos about lightning and allied areas from a variety of sources. A headline or description is listed, followed by the link. Please note that some of the links are perishable, which means you'll need to go to the source for the information.

Sun, C., 2016: "2 People Hit by Lightning at El Paso County Fairgrounds". *The Gazette*, July 19, 2016. Link: <http://gazette.com/article/1580739>

Sanchez, V., 2016: "Colorado Woman Recovering After Lightning Strike to Head". *9News.com*, July 21, 2016. Link: <http://www.9news.com/weather/colorado-woman-recovering-after-lightning-strike-to-head/279263720>

Mitchell, D., 2016: "Woman Hit by Lightning Has Insurance, Still Faces Massive Medical Bills". *Kwgn.com*. August 9, 2016. Link: <http://kwgn.com/2016/08/09/woman-hit-by-lightning-has-insurance-still-faces-massive-medical-bills/>

Robles, Y., 2016: "Man Killed by Tuesday Lightning Strike in Arvada". *Denver Post*, July 20, 2016. Link: <http://www.denverpost.com/2016/07/20/man-lightning-strike-arvada/>

Mustin, T., 2016: "Man Killed by Lightning Strike at Golf Course". *Denver.cbslocal.com*. July 20, 2016. Link: <http://denver.cbslocal.com/2016/07/20/peter-hawkes-lightning-strike-death/>

2016: "Pilot Captures Amazing Thunderstorm Photo at 37,000 Feet Over the Pacific Ocean". *thisiscoossal.com*. July 6, 2016. Link: <http://thisiscoossal.com/?s=lightning+educador>

Cuellar, C., 2016: "Lightning Strike Hole-in-One at W.D.M. Golf Green". *9News.com*, July 13, 2016. Link: <http://www.9news.com/news/nation-now/lightning-strikes-hole-in-one-at-wdm-golf-green/272000401>

Manning, E., 2016: "Lightning Misses Pensioner by Inches as It Hits House During Post-Heatwave Thunderstorms". *Uk.news.yahoo.com*. July 21, 2016. Link: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/lightning-misses-pensioner-by-inches-as-it-hits-114225048.html>

RightThisMinute, 2016: "Arizona Man Live Streams Nearly Getting Struck by Lightning". *Thedenverchannel.com*, August 4, 2016. Link: <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/national/arizona-man-live-streams-nearly-getting-struck-by-lightning>

CBS/AP, 2016: "Police: 2 Found Dead in NY Cemetery Were Struck by Lightning". *Cbsnews.com*, August 12, 2016. Link: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/police-2-found-dead-in-ny-cemetery-were-struck-by-lightning/>
