

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

October 11, 2024

ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO

Monthly Quote: “It felt like someone had hit me with a baseball bat in my head and then a huge pressure of thousands of pounds was on me, but then it released, and my heart was beating so fast.” Peyton Bailey, on a lightning strike in Utah. See citation in Lightning Links, below.

Members present: Clark, Terry, Brewer, Price, Cooper, Wachtel and Yarnell. Meeting began at 11:45 AM and ended at 12:50 PM.

1. The LDC is accepting donations, either as cash or check. If you donate via check, please make your check payable to Steve Clark at 755 S. Clinton Street, #2A; Denver, CO 80247. He will cash the check and keep the cash holdings specifically for the LDC. When the LDC incurs expenses, Steve will pay for services rendered through his bank account using the cash from LDC’s cash holdings. A log will be maintained detailing the inflow and outflow of monies. LDC currently has \$347.00 in cash.
2. We were unable to hold a meeting last month due to technology issues. I want to apologize to the members who tried to access the meeting and could not. The problem was the Meeting ID came up as invalid, even though it matched the Meeting ID seen in the meeting announcement which was e-mailed on September 3. Hospital administration was notified and some bugs were fixed that arose from the change of computer systems from Centura to CommonSpirit.
3. Paragraphs 4 and 5 below are news items from August and September.
4. Peyton Bailey, a Utah teenager, was among 50 teenagers hiking in the mud at Salina Canyon in Utah. They were about 1 hour into their 6-hour hike when lightning struck. Of the 50 teens, 31 were taken to area hospitals, 2 by helicopter, 5 by ambulance and the other 24 by their parents. All 50 reported feeling the shock. Peyton said many of her friends had headaches and tinnitus. The group was on a youth excursion with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
5. Robert Gift brought to our attention two incidents of lightning striking at football (soccer) matches in Africa during the same weekend in 2023. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 11 players were struck and killed by lightning – all on the visiting team. Players from the home team, Basanga, were unharmed. In Johannesburg, South Africa, half of the players from both teams were struck and fell to the ground in pain. Thankfully, no one died from that strike. Details about the Johannesburg incident could not be found online in South Africa newspapers.
6. During the fall of 2023, Thalita Teixeira Padilla was hit by lightning while walking her dog on a Boston area beach. She had been thrown into the air and had burns, nerve damage and a spinal cord injury. She was admitted to the hospital on September 9, 2023 and a month later was in a rehab facility learning how to walk again. Sometime in July 2024, she began to feel less pain and now is able to walk with a walker.

7. Colorado ranch hand JD Corley was struck by lightning at approximately 9 AM on September 17 while working at a ranch located about 4 miles south of Durango, Colorado, in the southwest corner of the state. Later, the ranch owner and another worker went looking for Corley after seeing Corley's dog lying by the barn, which was unusual since Corley and the dog were almost always together. They found Corley lying face down on the ground about 300 yards behind the barn. His clothes were shredded, with fragments of the clothes found 30 to 40 feet away from where he was found. The bill of his baseball cap was torn away from the remainder of the cap.

Corley was conscious but incoherent and he was in severe pain. He was taken to Mercy Hospital but was in critical condition and had to be flown to University of Colorado Hospital in Denver. Both legs were burned and there are two fractures in his skull – one on each side with the bone fragments pointing outward. One eardrum was torn and there was some bleeding. As of October 6, he was still in the hospital working to regain memory.

8. On July 31, 2024, lightning struck during a football match at the Oweko Primary School in the Nebbi District, located in northwest Uganda, where multiple schools were participating. There were 79 injuries (2 adults and 77 students). Of the injured, 18 were taken to Oweko Health Centre 1 and another 7 in critical condition were taken to Nebbi Referral Hospital. An investigation was conducted with interviews of the survivors, witnesses, teachers and district officials. A heavy rain had begun to fall and people sought shelter inside a classroom, shown below, with several more standing outdoors on a veranda. The lightning hit and most of the people on the veranda were affected. Some were thrown several feet and came-to in the mud.



This is a very poor community, even by Uganda standards. Our team found that it is not unusual for 70 or more children to be packed into a classroom designed for 30-45 students.

During the investigation, 36 pupils were interviewed along with the two adults, a cook and a teacher. Amnesia was commonly reported. The teacher was the most severely injured, with confusion, amnesia and trouble with understanding her husband's requests. She has not returned to work. The cook has returned to work after feeling numb and weak on one side. Four students were interviewed and their information was listed in the article. Three of the four were standing under the veranda and the fourth was running to take shelter under the veranda when the strike occurred. All four experienced temporary keraunoparalysis after the strike. Other sequelae included leg pains when standing or walking, photophobia, teary or moist eyes – especially when in the presence of bright objects or light. They also had arm pain, sleep disturbance and PTSD.

9. This month, we were supposed to meet with the father of a son that was recently struck by lightning. On the morning of October 11, the son was readmitted to the hospital and thus the father could not attend. Our prayers are with the son as he goes through a very difficult time. Barbara Brewer, who introduced the father and son to the LDC, said the son had been playing in a soccer match when a storm came in. The team sought shelter in the locker room and then the coaches decided it was okay to resume activity. The son went back onto the playing field and was hit. Barbara said 30 minutes had not elapsed from the time of last lightning or thunder when the team went back onto the field. He had rhabdomyolysis; his kidneys were bad and his blood pressure was high. He is able to walk but has bad muscle spasms. He had pain in his thigh muscles. He was readmitted to the hospital due to extreme pain.
10. Barbara provided us with an update on her son Jacob. He is still numb from his knees down to his feet and he cannot move his feet. Other than that, he is recovering very well. Jacob has his gluts, hamstrings and quads back and his upper extremities are good. His bowel and bladder are functioning properly. He is now attending college online at LSU-A and is doing very well there.
11. Randy Price gave us an update on his condition. He was the fellow struck inside the radio shack where he was working as a traffic controller for cargo ships, similar to an air traffic controller for airplanes. He still has cardiac damage. His heart rate is typically 80-90 bpm, but it can soar to around 160 bpm when he stands up. He still has liver damage.
12. We had a brief discussion on pain medications. According to Barbara, Lyrica aka Gabapin is usually the first medication given to lightning survivors for pain. Barbara began to use natural remedies when she found the traditional remedies were not working for her son.

Dr. Phil Yarnell mentioned a few other medications that are potentially helpful depending on the circumstances:

Trileptal is an anticonvulsant used to treat seizures.

Tizanidine is a muscle relaxant for the treatment of muscle spasms. Muscle relaxants can also be used for muscle soreness.

For topical pain, lidocaine is a local anesthetic which can be used to treat abnormal sensations and pain in the skin. It is available over-the-counter or via prescription.

13. Howard Wachtel recently had a close call with lightning while he was inside his house. He said there was a big storm, when everything around him lit up simultaneously with a sharp crack of thunder. Howard was struck by the loudness of the sound, as he noted thunder usually has a more rolling sound. He said there was no gap between the lightning and the thunder.

Howard also recalled a lightning safety issue at a public swimming pool in Boulder, Colorado. When lightning threatens, people are told to evacuate the premises. In the August 2012 minutes, Howard had said people were told to take shelter under trees when lightning threatens.

14. Linda Cooper told us she wants to see lightning education being taught in elementary school when the kids are studying weather. She occasionally gives lightning talks to school-age kids. She says oftentimes, the parents are clueless about lightning safety. She said she doesn't talk about being struck very much in public because most of the time, people do not believe her.

15. Linda also told us one of the principals at a school was struck by lightning while telling school buses to move.

16. LDC welcomes your questions. Please send them via e-mail to Steve Clark at sclarktoto@gmail.com. Your medical questions will be forwarded to Dr. Phil Yarnell for his review and will usually be taken up for discussion in the next month's meeting. Please be advised any questions posed are for the general consideration by the group and any answers given do not constitute a formal medical opinion. If a formal evaluation is requested, arrangements can be made directly with Dr. Yarnell. If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 or your local EMS.

17. Questions, comments, error notifications, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please send them to Steve Clark. Please keep the communications professional and respectful. They will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.

18. 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.

19. Next meeting: Friday, November 8, 2024, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM.

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.

DiMella, A., 2024: Utah Teen Speaks Out After Church Youth Group Survive Lightning Strike: 'A Miracle'. *Fox News Channel*. July 9, 2024. Link: <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/utah-teen-speaks-church-youth-group-survive-lightning-strike-a-miracle>

Aasim, M., 2023: Superstitions Run High as Lightning Kills 11 Football Players in Congo. *Medtigo*. August 21, 2023. Link: <https://medtigo.com/news/superstitions-run-high-as-lightning-kills-11-football-players-in-congo/>

Benjamin, S., 2024: Man Reportedly Struck by Lightning South of Durango. *Durango Herald*. September 17, 2024. Link: <https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/man-reportedly-struck-by-lightning-south-of-durango/>

Benjamin, S., 2024: Man Struck by Lightning Recovering in Denver-Area Hospital. *Durango Herald*. September 20, 2024. Link: <https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/man-struck-by-lightning-recovering-in-denver-area-hospital/>

Jha, R., 2024: Colorado Rancher Struck by Lightning, Still in the Hospital Weeks Later. *9News.com*. October 5-6, 2024. Link: <https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/colorado-news/colorado-rancher-struck-by-lightning/73-6d3a1df0-98e0-4cf7-960c-60fde5b9d9c5>

Unknown Author, 2024: Oweko School Lightning Incident Investigation. *The African Flash*. August 2024. At the present time, there is not a link to the article online. There will be sometime in the future.

Richards, B., 2024: Nurse Struck by Lightning Leaves Hospital After More Than a Year: "Feels Like I Was Born Again". *Yahoo! News*. September 21, 2024. Link: https://www.yahoo.com/news/nurse-struck-lightning-leaves-hospital-223416522.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall&guccounter=1

Holohan, M., 2024: 'A Whole New Life': Nurse Struck by Lightning Leaves Hospital After 1 Year of Recovery. *Today.com*. September 20, 2024. Link: <https://www.today.com/health/news/nurse-struck-lightning-leaves-hospital-rcna171986>