



The National Cooperative Observer

The National Cooperative Observer is an online newsletter.

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Weather Watcher Scores No Fault Record

By Michael Regan, *The
Tonawanda News*

*Reprinted courtesy of
The Tonawanda, NY, News.*
Jack Kanack's backyard
weather station on South
Meadow Drive has been
as much a fixture in North
Tonawanda over the last
several decades as his
attention to detail.

As an Observer for the
National Weather Service
during the last 30 years,
his drive to go above and
beyond what is expected of
him has earned the respect
of his peers.

That fact was noted
on Wednesday when a
representative of NWS
recognized him for the three
decades of devotion to
charting local weather with
a plaque and letter.

"It's quite an accom-
plishment when you think
about it," said **Dan Kelly**, an Observing
Program Leader (OPL) for the National
Weather Service [Buffalo, NY, office]. "He's
taken a reading literally everyday for the last
30 years. If something happens in North
Tonawanda, we know about it and we really
appreciate all that Jack does."

Kanack is credited with providing
succinctly accurate measurements during
the surprise October ice storm of 2006,
which assisted southern Niagara County
in obtaining federal relief funds, according
to Kelly.



Jack Kanack, Observer at North Tonawanda, NY, performed
such outstanding service for his area that the town of North
Tonawanda issued a proclamation declaring Jack Kanack Day
in his honor. Pictured is Jack holding the proclamation. He also
received a 30 year Length of Service Award from WFO Buffalo
Forecaster **Tom Paone** and OPL **Dan Kelly**.

Kanack, 51, began his tenure with the
service in April of 1982, tallying precipitation
and temperatures with the exactness of
a computer, and sometimes even better
than that.

"When I was first doing it, there was
just weather maps," he said. "There was no
Internet. There weren't any computer models
that would predict the weather. If it rained in
Detroit, you knew that 6 hours later it could
rain here. That's how we used to do it. I don't
always believe models."

"You've got all this news, and you don't know which one to believe and which one to pick. A lot of them [meteorologists] believe whatever the weather model is telling them, while I'm blending the art of the old way with the new."

Kanack said many of the new generation of weather forecasters don't necessarily know how to make a predication without the use of technology, which can make them less on-target in many cases.

"There's so many Websites and so many models they're putting out," he said. "It's too much clutter. "You've got all this news, and you don't know which one to believe and which one to pick. A lot of them [meteorologists] believe whatever the weather model is telling them, while I'm blending the art of the old way with the new."

That art can entail simple observations like the contrail of a passing airplane showing the amount of humidity in the air or the possibility of precipitation.

Kanack has taken his gift of observation into his own venture as well. When he launched the Website, www.weathermedic.com last year.

Since then, he's been contacted by people all over the country seeking his insight — from pea harvesters in Wisconsin to contractors working on wind farms in Iowa and even the occasional party host.

His skills can be particularly helpful in his hometown, where weather can often affect business.

"New York is the most sensitive state in the country when it comes to weather sensitivity," he said. "The difference between your profits in a good year or bad year could swing either way about 14 percent."

Kanack said he will continue with his passion into the future, with no plans to slow down. He said what started as a youthful interest, watching the likes of local weather great, Tom Jolls, has only grown stronger.

"I love doing what I'm doing," he said. "I feel fortunate that a lot of people can't do what they love to do and I'm going to stick with it." ☼

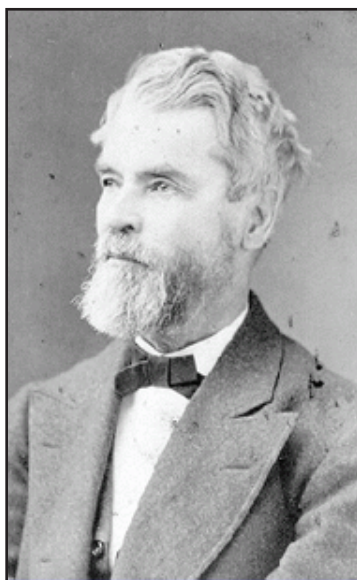
Formation and Evolution: Division of Telegrams

The last edition of the Coop Newsletter introduced the beginnings of U.S. weather history. This edition picks up in the 1870s.

The catalyst for the formation of the new weather agency was Professor Increase A. Lapham of Milwaukee, WI, a student of meteorology.

Professor Lapham supported a storm warning service for the Great Lakes. He sent frequent clippings of maritime casualties to General Halbert E. Paine, Congressman for Milwaukee. In one letter, Lapham asked if it were not "...the duty of the government to see whether anything can be done to prevent, at least, some portion of this sad loss in the future...?"

Lapham's enthusiasm for a national weather service was supported by others, including the New York Chamber of Commerce. One of the supporters was Colonel Albert J.



Professor Increase A. Lapham of Milwaukee

Myer, Chief of the Signal Service. Colonel Myer used a winter storm, traced to Washington, D.C. from the Midwest, as an example of the possibilities for such a weather service.

Congressman Paine recognized the importance and practicability of Lapham's cause. On February 2, 1870, he introduced a Joint Congressional Resolution requiring the Secretary of War, "to provide for taking meteorological observations at the military stations in the interior of the continent and at other points in the States and Territories...and for giving notice on the northern [Great]

lakes and on the seacoast by magnetic telegraph and marine signals of the approach and force of storms."

The Resolution was passed by Congress on February 9, 1870, and signed into law soon

after by President Ulysses S. Grant. Little attention was given by the press to the short, 7-line resolution, but an agency had been born which would affect the daily lives of most of the citizens of the United States through its forecasts and warnings.

Since considerable structure and organization was necessary, and since the operation of the new service was dependent on a reliable communication system, the new service was placed under the Secretary of War because, "military discipline would probably secure the greatest promptness, regularity, and accuracy in the required observations."

Within the Department of War, it was assigned to the Signal Service Corps, organized in 1860, under Brevet Brigadier General Albert J. Myer. General Myer gave the National Weather Service its first name: The Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit of Commerce.

At 7:35 a.m. on November 1, 1870, the first systematized and synchronous meteorological reports were taken by observer-sergeants at 24 stations in the new agency. These observations, which were transmitted by telegraph to the central office in Washington, D.C., marked the beginning of the new division of the Signal Service.

The weather service work of the new organization demanded a large number of men familiar with observations, theoretic, and practical meteorology. The commissioned officers detailed to Signal Service work were required to acquire meteorological knowledge by studying the available literature and consulting with, and receiving instruction from, leading meteorologists.

For the education of weather observers (enlisted men) a school of meteorology was added to the existing school of instruction



For the education of weather observers (enlisted men) a school of meteorology was added to the existing school of instruction in telegraphy and military signaling located at Fort Myer (then Fort Whipple), in Virginia.

in telegraphy and military signaling at Fort Whipple, VA, (now at Fort Myer). Instruction for the observers consisted of courses in military tactics, signaling, telegraphy, telegraphic line construction, electricity, meteorology, and practical work in meteorological observation.

In 1882, a course for commissioned officers was added to the school covering meteorology, mathematics, and electricity. The training school of meteorology at Fort Myer was abolished by order of the Secretary of War in 1886.

Although most of the weather observations were taken by the military, the Signal Service turned to civilians for meteorological knowledge. On November 8, 1870, General Myer asked Professor Lapham to assume responsibility for the Great Lakes region (with a salary of \$167 per month). Lapham obliged by issuing the first storm warning the same day. The dispatch sent to observers on the Great Lakes, read:

"High wind all day yesterday at Cheyenne and Omaha; a very high wind this morning at Omaha; barometer falling with high winds at Chicago and Milwaukee today; barometer falling and thermometer rising at Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Buffalo and Rochester; high winds probable along the Lakes." ☼

To be continued in the fall edition of the National Cooperative Observer.

"military discipline would probably secure the greatest promptness, regularity, and accuracy in the required observations."

John Campanius Holm Awards

Eddie Chapman, center, of Lake Providence, LA, accepted a John Campanius Holm Award. The award recognized his outstanding contributions as well of those of his recently deceased brother, **Lloyd**. The award was presented by Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC) **Alan Gerard**, WFO Jackson, MS, and OPL **Latrice Maxie**. The Chapman brothers began taking weather observations in February 1982. Photo by Meteorologist Intern **Daniel Lamb**.



Joseph Acree Jr. proudly accepts a John Campanius Holm Award and 40 Year Length of Service Award. The awards were presented by MIC **Alan Gerard** and OPL **Latrice Maxie**, WFO Jackson, MS. Joseph has been taking extremely accurate weather observations since January 1972.

55 Year Benjamin Franklin Awards

Heather (not pictured) and **John Balock** of Melstone, MT, received the Benjamin Franklin Award for 55 years of outstanding service in the NWS Cooperative Observer Program. The Balocks began taking weather observations on February 20, 1957.

In addition to weather observing, John learned how to operate heavy equipment when he joined the U.S. Navy in 1945. He and Heather owned their own excavating business from 1950 to 2007, when they turned the business over to their son and daughter-in-law. This year Heather and John plan to retire from weather observing, but their daughter-in-law, **Lorrie Balock**, will continue the family weather observing tradition. Lorrie has been their backup observer for 25 years.



From left, **Tom Frieders**, Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM), WFO Billings, MT, and Observer **John Balock**. Photo by OPL **Carolyn Willis**.



Joe "Buzz" Thacker, right, of Roaring Springs, TX, was awarded the Benjamin Franklin Award by WFO Lubbock, TX, MIC **Justin Weaver**.

Photo by Carol Campbell, *Motley County Tribune*

Joe "Buzz" Thacker of Roaring Springs, TX, was awarded the Benjamin Franklin Award during a monthly Roaring Springs Lions Club meeting. In attendance was Buzz's wife, **Tince**, daughter-in-law, **Pam**. Forecaster **Shawn Ellis**, Senior Service Hydrologist **John Lipe** and OPL **Mike Turner** also attended. Buzz took over the Observer job from his father, **Melton Thacker**.

Buzz has been reporting rain and snowfall in Roaring Springs for as long as he can remember. "When I was growing up, we had a weather station behind the hardware store," Buzz explained. "We recorded the weather every morning." He called his passion for weather reporting "a labor of love." Buzz is also the Roaring Springs historian, faithful Lions Club Member, entrepreneur and civic leader. He said, "I've recorded every drop of rain in Roaring Springs since 1957." Measuring rain or snow when it is horizontal can be a real challenge, Buzz said, referring to the oftentimes windy weather in this part of the country. It's been a fun trip he says.

50 Year Edward H. Stoll Award

Bobbie Foster, President and General Manager of WCON Radio in Cornelia, GA, was presented the Edward H. Stoll Award for her 50 years of dedicated service in the Cooperative Observer Program. MIC **Larry Gabric** from WFO Greenville-Spartanburg, SC, presented the award. Photo by OPL **Chris Horne**.



50 Year Honored Institution Awards



From left, WFO Gaylord, MI, MIC **Bruce Smith**, and Observers **Jim Horton** and **Don Shea**. Jim is showing the 50 year Honored Institution Award presented to **Old Mission**, part of the **Peninsula Fruit Exchange Inc.** Jim and crew have been taking observations at this site since 1962. Photo by OPL **Keith Berger**.

The **Turnersburg, NC, Post Office** received an Honored Institution Award for 50 years of service. Receiving the award is Postmaster **Carolyn Steelman**. The award was presented by OPL **Chris Horne**, WFO Greenville-Spartanburg, SC.



45 Year Dick Hagemeyer Service Awards

From left are MIC **Mike Vescio**, WFO Pendleton, OR, presents a 45 year Length of Service Award to Observer **John Duckworth** with help from NWS Western Region Headquarters Director **Vickie Nadolski**.



Barbara J. Ekker, Observer at Hanksville, UT, was presented the Dick Hagemeyer Award for 45 years of service by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT. Barbara is also an A-Paid observer for the Salt Lake City Forecast Office.

Nelda Ray of Youngsport, TX, accepted a Dick Hagemeyer 45 Year Length of Service Award from MIC **Greg Patrick**, WFO Fort Worth, TX. A luncheon was held at Johnny's Steakhouse in Salado, TX, in honor of Nelda. The photo was taken by Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT) **Troy Marshall**.



40 Year Length of Service Awards



Glennie Batt, Observer from Lisco, NE, was presented with a 40 Year Length of Service Award and pin by HMT **Cory Van Pelt** of WFO North Platte, NE. In 2001, Glennie was presented with the John Campanius Holm Award, a prestigious award of national recognition that only 20 observers per year receive. She has been a reliable Observer of high renown.

Carl Evans, left, Observer at Summit, UT, is shown with his 40 year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by Christopher Young, Meteorologist at WFO Salt Lake City, UT. Photo taken by OPL **Steve Summy**.



O. Reed Jeffery, Observer at Delta, UT, is shown with his 40 year Length of Service Award. In addition to reading the maximum and minimum thermometers, standard rain gauge, and Fischer & Porter rain gauge for the Observer program, Reed also provides aviation observations as an A-Paid Observer. Award presented, and photo taken by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT.



35 Year Length of Service Awards



Lee J. Anderson, Observer at Manti, UT, was presented a 35 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented to Lee and his wife, **Judy**, by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT.



Mrs. Hayden of Crawford, MS, accepted a 35 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Latrice Maxie**, WFO Jackson, MS. Mrs. Hayden has been taking weather observations since March 1977.



Tommi Jo Cruise of Flomot, TX, shows her 35 Year Length of Service Award presented by MIC **Justin Weaver**, WFO Lubbock, TX. The award ceremony was conducted at the Roaring Springs, TX, Lions Club monthly meeting. Also attending was **John Lipe**, Senior Service Hydrologist, the Motely County Sherriff and the County Emergency Operations Coordinator. Flomot is a rural ranching community.



Edward Nagle of Angola, IN, accepts a 35 Year Length of Service Award. Among Edward's many stories is one about the bitter cold day the thermograph kept running even though the temperature got down to -27°F , causing the needle to run off of the bottom of the thermograph paper. The award was presented by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, WFO Northern Indiana.

30 and 25 Year Length of Service Awards 25 Year Honored Institution Awards



Sharon Dale Marsh, right, Observer at Escalante, UT, was presented a 30 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT.



Moss Sumida, right, of Perry, UT, has contributed to the Coop program for 25 years. Moss received a certificate and lapel pin to commemorate the occasion from OPL **Gary Wicklund**, WFO Pocatello, ID.
Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



Bertha Varndao accepted a 25 Year Length of Service Award from MIC **Alan Gerard**, WFO Jackson, MS. Bertha has been taking weather observations since October 1986.
Photo by OPL **Latrice Maxie**, WFO Jackson, MS.

Maryllis Heyborn, Observer at Orderville, UT, was presented a 30 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City. Mrs. Heyborn requested no photo taken.

Southern Utah Fuel Company Observers at Salina, UT, were presented a 25 Year Honored Institution Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT. The observers requested no picture.

The **Utah Department Of Transportation**, Observers at Strawberry Highway Station, UT, were presented a 25 Year Honored Institution Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT. The observers requested no picture.

25 Year Honored Institution Awards 20, 15 Year Length of Service Awards



Mike Burton, right, dispatcher and one of the observers at the city of Alta, UT, was presented a 25 Year Honored Institution Award by Meteorologist **Christopher Young**, WFO Salt Lake City, UT.
Photo taken by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City.



The **Clinton, SC, Utilities Water Plant** receives an Honored Institution Award for 25 years of service. Receiving this award is **Jimmy Miller**, Chief Operator/Supervisor. The award was presented by OPL **Chris Horne**, WFO Greenville-Spartanburg, SC.



A 20 Year Length of Service award was presented to **LaRee and Bill Dye**, Observers at Castle Dale, UT. The award was presented by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City. The Dye's have done an outstanding job reporting the climate in this central Utah community.



Ben Blonquist, Observer at Coalville, UT, was presented a 15 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City.

15 and 10 Year Length of Service Awards



From left, WFO Lubbock, TX, MIC **Justin Weaver** presents a 15 Year Length of Service Award to **Clinton Bowman**, center, of Denver City, TX, and his wife **Joy**. Also attending was Lubbock Administrative Support Assistant **Marsha Black**.
Photo by OPL **Mike Turner**.



From left, OPL **Gary Wicklund**, WFO Pocatello, ID, presents a 15 Year Length of Service Award to **Kenneth Fagnant**.
Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.

Margaret Bowman, Observer at Coalville, UT, was presented with a 15 year Length of Service Award by OPL **Steve Summy**, WFO Salt Lake City. She requested no photo.

WFO Topeka, KS, presented a 10 Year Length of Service Award to **Doug Swearingen** of Frankfort, KS. The award was presented by Met Intern **Shawn Byrne** and retired OPL **Michael Couch**. No photo.



Paula Farrell shows her 10 year Length of Service Award presented by OPL **Gary Wicklund**, WFO Pocatello, ID. Photo by MIC **Rick Dittman**.



OPL **Gary Wicklund**, WFO Pocatello, ID, presents the 10 year Length of Service Award to **D.D. Lamb**. Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



From left, **Marjorie Cooper** and **Gail Pratt** show their 10 Year Length of Service Awards. Gail and Marjorie take observations at Trout Lake, on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Photo by CPM **Scott Rozanski**, WFO Gaylord, MI.

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September, October, November Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks From the Climate Prediction Center

