



Whither The Weather, Heather?

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

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Clearly, we've seen some horrendous weather of late. With hundreds killed in the southeast of our country, it puts into perspective our complaints about heavy fog, drenching rain and a cold and damp Spring. But, like hurricanes vs the tails of hurricanes, (see SSP, "Hurricanes on Long Island", 11/1/07; see SSP, "Preparing Again for Hurricanes", 8/20/08; see SSP, "Hunkering Down on Long Island - 2010", 9/8/10), weather like we've been seeing is far more likely to affect us and thus we should understand the forces at play. This column is about that.

The Lake Effect

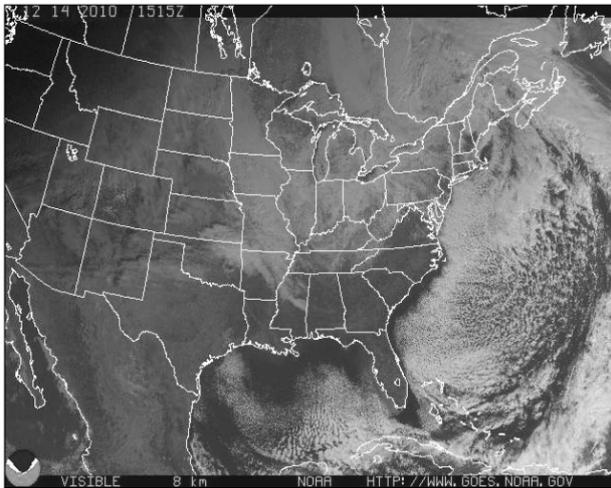
We've all heard of the "lake effect" where the Great Lakes dump so much snow on upstate New York and nearby states. Snow accumulations of 10'-12' over the course of the winter in Buffalo are not unusual. The phenomenon occurs when cold air flows over the relatively warm lakes. The relative heat of the lakes leads to warming of the lowest levels of the atmosphere, which promotes rising air. When air rises in the atmosphere, it is cooled, and if enough upward motion (and thus enough cooling) results, then the air will reach its dew point and condensation will occur leading to cloud development. Eventually the clouds will produce precipitation. And, if you've been following the weather upstate (I was just up there for USCG business), flooding from unrelenting rain is rampant.

The Ocean Effect

Why doesn't that happen here, at the seashore where all the same characteristics are at hand - warmer water, winds and cold air? In fact, it does.

The ocean effect just doesn't get as much media attention since nobody lives over the ocean, and there are no roads to get clogged by snow. Also, the temperature gradient isn't as great since we don't get as much of that Canadian cold air as they do upstate.

Since most of us aren't boating during the winter months, it isn't much of an issue. However, with the extremes of weather we've been seeing, we can see the ocean effect both in the Fall and in the Spring. And what doesn't fall as snow falls as rain. And plenty of it as we've seen.



courtesy of NOAA

The accompanying satellite photo shows an excellent example of ocean effect conditions. Clear skies over the mainland and plenty of cloud cover

over the ocean - and seashore communities. The basics are very similar to the lake effect scenario, thus it will occur when rather cold air flows over the warmer ocean waters. Once the air has been over the water long enough (i.e. a bit offshore), it warms and rises - and clouds will form. And, if the temperature difference between the air and the water is large enough, precipitation will develop from these clouds. This situation will frequently occur behind a cold front which has moved off shore. Typically a cold front will be accompanied by showers, then clearing skies are likely after the front has passed and the colder and drier air mass moves in. Forecasts in coastal locations will indicate this progression of events, but offshore the situation may be different with clearing skies initially followed by the ocean effect conditions described above. And remember, all ye seaside residents, Montauk is 130 miles out at sea, relative to New York City. These long shorelines of the northeast can create "at sea" weather conditions, right here on land.

So if you happen to be operating over the Atlantic waters this Spring (or Fall) when a particularly cold air mass follows a cold front, be aware that despite forecasts of clearing, windy and colder conditions, offshore it is very likely that considerable clouds will be experienced, with the real potential for serious rain, or snow, at times.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."

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County Clerk Update
by SUFFOLK COUNTY CLERK
JUDY PASCALE

COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE CELEBRATES "TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS & SONS TO WORK DAY"

Suffolk County Clerk Judith Pascale and her staff in the County Clerk's Office recently celebrated "Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day" on April 28th. With nearly a dozen children and their parents participating in the day's events, "Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day" was a huge success for the 16th consecutive year in the County Clerk's Office.

"Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day is a vital initiative because it promotes parent-child bonding on a new level. By affording our children the opportunity to experience our careers, we are providing them with an immediate educational experience, as well as the possibility of fostering long-term goals and motivation," commented Suffolk County Clerk Judith Pascale.

Initially started in 1993 by the Ms. Foundation, "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" has been an integral part in helping adolescent girls reinforce their natural strengths and have optimism in an arena of vital importance to their lives. By encouraging adults to take their children to work with them for a day and designing activities focused on building self esteem, "Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day" calls attention to the importance of keeping children healthy, strong, and confident through their teenage years and into adulthood.

The program was recently changed to "Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day", to include sons, and will continue to educate girls and boys about the wealth of job possibilities for their future, teach them about the realities of work, and give them a glimpse of what the adults in their lives do during the day.