



Better Than Uncle Weatherby? Just Look Up!

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Anybody who was born prior to, say, 1970, can remember the newscaster/weatherman Tex Antoine, aka, Uncle Weatherby. While weather forecasting is far more reliable than ever before, it pales in our esteem for the mariner who can open the back door, look up, gaze knowingly for a second or two, and pronounce, "Nah, we'll be coming home in a whopper. Tomorrow will be better." And, sure enough, a half day later, it is pouring...

This is all about that mariner...

Clouds are Batteries

Since this column started, we've written about the weather and seamanship three times (see "Skipping in Heavy Weather," SSP, 10/11/06; "Lightning - Shocking!" SSP, 3/07/07; "Weathering the Squall," SSP, 11/28/07 - for copies email me below). And, as those columns implied, clouds are batteries that store water and tremendous power. But the history of weather forecasting goes back to the dawn of time and is loaded with old wisdoms ("mare's tails and mackerel scales make tall-ship captains

take in their sails") and many jokes ("where else can you be so wrong so often and keep your job!"). So, where does the weather, and these "sayings," come from?

Part of the problem of weather forecasting was solved over a hundred years ago by British meteorologist Luke Howard, when he devised a system of nomenclature that the rest of the world's scientists were constantly arguing about. Every country wanted to use its own language and definitions for naming clouds and their effects. Howard came forward using, you guessed it, Latin, and the fight was over. Meteorologists the world over accepted his type/sub-type system:

Cirrus ("hair") - wispy, high-level clouds that foretell a major weather system on its way (the mare's tails)

Stratus ("layer") - these cloud formations have no specific feature except that they only form at specific altitudes (see the diagram)

Cumulus ("pile") - the puffy clouds that coalesce into

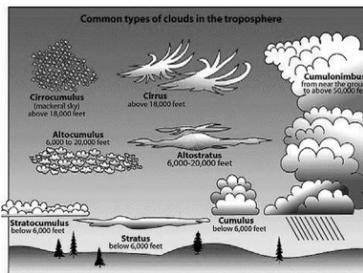
the thunderheads we all recognize that then presages the near immediate arrival of a major storm. BTW, the warmer the weather, the bigger they get (pile up into the sky)

Nimbus ("precipitating") - we're all familiar with these. By this time, it's raining. And, the darker they are, the more water they are carrying.

Alto ("high") - like in music, while it means high, it means the second-highest (soprano or treble is higher in music) and cirrus's and, often, the cumulo's (thunderheads) are even higher.

Look Up!

Watching the weather over hours or even days, often sub-



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consciously by that back-door mariner, adds to your skills in predicting the weather. And it is all about the sun, the sea and the land interacting.

The sun heats the land faster than the sea. The warm air rises, taking some moisture from the sea, lakes, creeks and rivers with it, and forms cumulus (puffy) clouds. This vacuum effect then brings in cooler air from the sea to fill the gap created by the rising air over the land and we have what we call a sea-breeze ("winds are known from whence they blow, currents are known for whence they flow."). The opposite effects happen at night, as you might guess. The land cools faster and the process reverses. All this is generally called "convection." And where convection is occurring, clouds are forming - and they are batteries storing up water and power.

Blankets Presage Rain

Another sign that weather is approaching is when the sky cover builds and the sea breeze stops...The cloud cover has now gotten so thick that the sun can't heat the air

underneath the clouds. That's when someone mutters, "Please, let it rain and clear out this humidity..." The cloud is acting like a blanket - and you know how much you like blankets in the summertime!

Ancient mariners looked for clouds for two reasons. They didn't know that convection was causing the wind but clouds meant wind. They also meant land. Convection first lines the shore line with clouds. "Land Ho!" And it builds from there.

Some more proverbs? See if you can divine why they are true, based on what you now know:

"The moon with a circle brings water in her beak..."

"Rain before seven? Over by eleven."

"Red sky at morning? Sailor take warning!"

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

Bonner and Romaine Plan Would Eliminate Town Vehicles for Department Heads and Deputies

Brookhaven Town Council Members Keith Romaine and Jane Bonner are proposing a comprehensive plan to end the use of taxpayer-funded vehicles for commissioners, deputy commissioners, division heads and certain management and administrative staffers. Considering all departments are submitting plans to tighten their fiscal belts, both Bonner and Romaine explained that the time has come to implement more stringent requirements on use of town-owned vehicles.

Romaine and Bonner, who use their own personal cars and refused to take a town car, noted that under this initial stage, a number of administrative personnel would have to give up their taxpayer-funded cars. In addition, the plan would require those same individuals to submit a formal request that would justify the need to use a town car. Once reviewed and approval is granted, those employees could be given access to a town pool car. Bonner and Romaine are also urging that any town car that will not be used as a pool car, be auctioned off,

which would help the town generate revenue.

"While many of the individuals employed by the town are hard-working people, it is imperative for us to institute a new policy of accountability so that we can better serve and protect our taxpayers," Councilwoman Bonner said. "By implementing these reforms we can help ensure the public's trust that their taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely, and that the town is acting in an accountable way."

"Town vehicles should only be used for town business, period. No town management or administrative employee should be given a free car or SUV to use how they want and when they want," said Councilman Romaine. "No one - whether a commissioner, a deputy commissioner, division head or staff aide - should be given a vehicle unless it is an absolute necessary requirement of an individual's daily duties."

"Currently, the town doles out taxpayer-financed cars to numerous management employees at town hall - most of

whom do not require a vehicle to perform their duties. They get the cars simply as a fringe benefit on the taxpayer's dollar," Councilman Romaine continued. "Along with these cars, taxpayers are also footing the bill for unlimited amounts of gasoline, maintenance, repairs and the required insurance. Brookhaven taxpayers should not have to bear the burden of these costs any longer."

"It is important to lead by example," said Councilman Romaine. "That is why I made a campaign pledge to not accept a taxpayer-funded vehicle, and I have fulfilled that promise by declining a town car." Councilwoman Bonner also declined the taxpayer-funded vehicle and said, "I made a commitment to the people of the 2nd Council District that I would challenge government to be more responsive and efficient. By streamlining town government and saving taxpayers more of their hard-earned money, this sensible approach will go a long way towards achieving that goal."

"As a homeowner and

mother of two children, I know the financial difficulties facing hard-working families throughout Brookhaven Town," Councilwoman Bonner said. "This proposal that Councilman Romaine and I have authored will put an end to the Cadillac type of policy that has allowed the use of town vehicles and SUVs at the expense of Brookhaven taxpayers. It is our hope that our colleagues will approve this fiscally sound plan immediately."

Among the departments and divisions being considered and reviewed in the plan are the Department of Aviation and Transportation; the Department of Building and Fire Prevention; the Department of Housing, Community Development and Intergovernmental Affairs; the Department of Planning, Environment and Land Acquisition; the Department of Law; the Department of Parks, Recreation, Sports and Cultural Resources; the Division of Personnel; the Department of Public Safety; the Division of Purchasing; the Division of Senior Citizens Serv-

ices; the Supervisor's Office; the Town Clerk's Office; the Department of Waste Management; and the Division of Women's Services.

Both Councilman Romaine and Councilwoman Bonner explained they have also asked the Town Finance Department to come up with a financial impact detailing how much money this proposal would save Brookhaven taxpayers. Included in this request are costs associated with vehicle insurance, gasoline, registration fees, maintenance and repairs.

Council members Bonner and Romaine emphasized this level-headed approach will streamline town government and save taxpayers more of their hard-earned money. This plan, which takes a non-partisan approach, will once and for all end the town's 'Cadillac' menu of options when it comes to doling out taxpayer-funded vehicles, and instead will encourage a more fiscally responsible policy that will save the town and its residents money.