

MidWest Tracker



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Special Event

**July 21st, 2008 at 6pm
MidWest Annual Picnic**



Welcome!

*Dale Bernstein, President/CEO
MidWest 107*



Welcome to the MidWest Tracker Newsletter!

The MidWest Tracker Newsletter has and continues to be a great source of connection, of community commitment for our members, our associates, supporters, fellow organizations, media and the general public. It's a means of mutual appreciation and knowing of what and why we and other such organizations and agencies do what we do.

Longfellow once said – “Be still sad heart, and cease repining; Behind the clouds the sun is shining, Thy fate is the common fate of all, Into each life a little rain must fall, Some days must be dark and dreary.”

Well folks, we certainly have seen a little rain. As we have seen, report after report, the urgency for preparedness. *Fluid Hydraulics, Fluid Mechanics, Water Dynamics*, no matter the name, Mother Nature will not only find a path, Mother Nature will choose her own path.

For the MidWest MOD's, NCO's, AMOD's, members and others, the early weeks of June have afforded few hours of rest and a tremendous level of commitment to the communities of which we serve. Thank you for all your efforts in serving our community.

The one constant of life, is change. The game in my personal view is to prepare and be prepared for change. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. That may seem a simplistic approach for some folks. However for the members of *MidWest* and other such committed organizations and agencies, it is what we do.

We are all aware of the challenges Mother Nature presented our area with this past month, so let's focus on our response and duty.

Let's discuss **T>L>C>S**. Time, Location, Condition and Source. I will be the first to raise my hand if asked who can present a better TLCS report. I know first hand that it gets busy out there folks.

In the heat of the situation, sometimes with the magnitude of communications going on, it is near impossible to define your mind into TLCS as you make your report. However – it is simply a must, it has to be done. No matter if it is I, a MOD in the field, a board member in the field, an NCO in the field, any member – TLCS is a proven means of an accurate report vs. a non report.

As I have been known to reminisce, “back in the day” when a call came in – “where are you?” and the response was, “just down the road from A & Q” – well those days are gone. Hey, been there, done that, and yep guilty of committing the act from time to time. I find that I trip up in the format, as we all have at one time or another, it happens. However in all seriousness folks, it can't happen.

What happens is accumulative misinformation overload for the MOD, Relay Ops, Base Ops and etc, people on duty and right on down the line. This is not a challenge that only MidWest is dealt with, it has been, it is and will continue to be a communication challenge that is dealt with at the highest level – to include the military, and I might add world wide.

Success of accurate reporting, no matter the level of report, is only as good as the source. WE are the source. Know your direction, know your compass. When I say that, be your compass. Take a breath, take a bearing. Hold a course bearing and know your course.

We all know that our location is based on reference points. Again, guilty as charged in that I will get caught up in a track, and give a road, landmark location, and immediately after the transmit know I should have taken one more second to take a breath, find and report from my reference point. We're human, it happens, however being human, we can learn and move forward.

Also, please remember that the radio net control operator is the top cop. Be they he or she, they are extremely busy! If net control states severe criteria only, *then a report of pea size hail may not be in focus, etc.*

As good as it gets, can always get better! Hands down folks, we are pretty darn good at what we do and congratulations and sincere thanks to each and every member that continues to go above and beyond in so many ways!

My personal sincere thanks to each and every MidWest member for all that you do! Let's be safe out there.

Forward.

db

Recapping 2008 Spotter Training



In March, *MidWest SSTRC* hosted another very successful tornado spotter class held in Fitchburg. Approximately 200 people attended from all over our area.

Our deepest thanks and appreciation go out to the City of Fitchburg, Mayor Tom Clauder, Gary Cannalte, Jay McClellan, Rusty Kapela, Mark Darrin the Fitchburg Fire Department, Dane County Emergency Management and especially out to those of you in attendance. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on what we can do to improve this important event, please send us an email.

In the News



Sunday, April 21, 2008 – MidWest SSTRC was headlined in the Wisconsin State Journal. To read this very well written article, just follow the link.

<http://www.madison.com/wsj/topstories/282359>

New Generals in Town

Congratulations to Brent Cook, KC9KUM, Tony Kremm, KC9NBL and Sandy Letlebo, KC9LZW on passing the General Amateur Radio License exam!

No Sunspots?



Some scientists are becoming a little concerned about the lack of sunspot activity this year. Some scientists even speculate we could see a mini ice age, while other scientists (NASA) are not so sure yet and say the sun spot cycle is very normal.

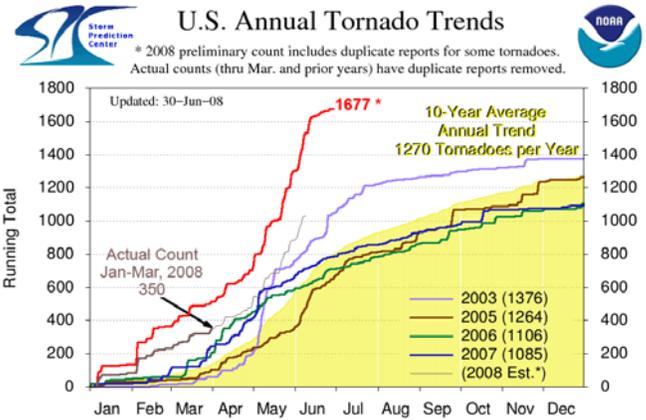
New Madison Rainfall Record

June, 2008 was the wettest June ever recorded in Madison history. The old record of 9.95 inches of rain held since June, 1978 was crushed with a new record of 10.93 inches in June, 2008 and this wasn't the only record set. June, 2008 was also one of the ten wettest months ever, second only to August, 2007 with 15.18 inches. Record daily rainfall amounts were also made on June 7th, 8th and 12th. Rainfall records were set in Milwaukee and many other areas as well. As a result, there were massive floods, broken levees, numerous road closures, and millions of dollars in damage from the record precipitation.

2008 Season Continues Above Average

Steve Fitzsimmons, MidWest 136

The red line that looks more like a rocket launch than a line on a graph represents the number of tornadoes reported so far in 2008.



As of July 11th, Wisconsin is already above average with 28 confirmed tornadoes. If this trend continues, we can expect a fairly busy summer and will need all the help and support you can give. As in every year, training and experience become increasingly important.

Where can you find more training? Here are three web sites for starters...

1. <http://www.midwestsstrc.org/training.php>
2. [Madison Area Science and Technology](http://www.madisonarea.org/science/technology/)
3. http://www.mke-skywarn.org/storm_spotters.html



Dale (left) and Tim (right) in front of Dale's 107 unit

How to Find a Tornado

by [George E. Hrabovsky](#), *MidWest 299*
President, [Madison Area Science and Technology](#)



As I explained how we caught three tornadoes last Thursday to Rusty Kapela on the phone yesterday, it occurred to me that it was a combination of luck and knowing the structure and dynamics of thunderstorms down cold. The luck came into it because we hit two places where the terrain was unexpectedly and uncharacteristically good for viewing at long distances (long valleys with little or no haze-thank you for the rear-flank downdrafts...)

The luck also came into it as we were able to wind our way through the maze of still-unflooded roads and highways, eventually getting on 18 heading towards Cambridge from the east. We were not getting any radio reception at this point, and all we had was the weather radio to track warnings. We knew there was a cell heading for Cambridge that would be there around 1800. We managed to get there a few minutes ahead of time. We took 73 south and had a great view of a rotating wall cloud.

We turned on to A, crossed the Interstate, took the turn and had this view right in front of us [see photo above]. We called in the wall cloud report and then a debris cloud formed and got itself together. Another tornado! A short time later it dissipated, then another vortex of debris started a bit further to the south of the first. These lasted for about a minute. Finding these beasts was not an accident. We know what to look for and where to look for it.

First, while we were watching we realized that the thunderstorm was becoming a High-Precipitation, or HP, storm. Curtains of rain were wrapping around the mesocyclone and this precipitation was becoming quite heavy; obscuring the area where any tornado would form. To discover any tornadoes, we would have to get close. You can see that in the photograph there is a precipitation core off to the left (where the RFD is located). We identified the updraft base and wall-cloud. We followed what roads were available that took us into the target area from the best direction.

We could see the storm and understood that the area of concern would pass us to the left as we were. We knew we had to get south and east of the storm, and took the roads necessary to do this. We were also aware of possible escape routes in case things got too dangerous. It was this combination that allowed us to be so successful.

What is the lesson? Understand storm structure. When you hear that storms are moving to the northeast at 50 mph, you know there is no way you will catch them, you have to get out ahead of them and position yourself to be able to watch the updraft base. Keep watching the storm for fundamental changes. It is likely that the storm will change several times while you are watching it. It might start out as an elevated, low precipitation storm with little surface moisture at work, then it could evolve into a more classic super cell with a distinct and rain-free updraft base, then evolve into a high-precipitation storm whose updraft is obscured by curtains of rain and hail.

You have to keep on your toes and always ask yourself if you understand what you are looking at. I know I always do that, and often it takes ten or fifteen minutes to figure things out. Here is a note for those watching the radar and doing now casting. It is not valuable (unless you are chasing hail and flooding) to give the position of the highest dBz cells. It is better to direct people to bounded weak echo regions (BWER, these can often look like hook-echoes).

Did You Know? (From NWS website)

Wisconsin's temperature extremes run from a low of -55 degrees to a high of 114. Yikes! Also, every rain drop falling from T-Storm starts as ice or snow.



Wednesday Night Nets

Check-in begins at 7pm on the Ham Radio side on 444.375 MHz. Test your radios.

Check-ins begin at 7:30pm on the Business Band side on 451.275 MHz. Practice your TLCS.



Tom Skilling's Before The Forecast

WGN and Tom Skilling have put together a very educational program called "Before the Forecast". On this daily web program, Tom Skilling shares more details behind current and future weather forecasts. It's entertaining as well as educational.

<http://wgntv.trb.com/news/weather/wgn-weather-tom-skilling-before-the-forecast,0,6735707.htmlstory>



Picture of mammatus clouds after July 10th Deracheo
Courtesy Mike, MW 147

MidWest Annual Picnic

Where: Waunakee Village Park

When: July 21st, 6:00pm CDT

**First shelter house on the right
as you enter the park from Main Street.**

Directions:

Waunakee Village Park is located on the East side of downtown Waunakee

From the West ? State Hwy 19: Travel east on Hwy 19 all the way through downtown Waunakee. The park will be on the south side of the street (right) with the entrance just before the corner of Main Street and Division.

From the East ? Interstate 90/94: West into the Village on State Hwy 19/113 ? the park is on the east edge of the Village at the corner of State Hwy 19/113 and Division Street.

From the South ? State Hwy 113/Hwy Q: North through the Village, passing the High School on your right. At the intersection of State Hwy 113/Hwy Q and State Hwy 19 (Main Street) turn tight. Travel east on Main Street 6 blocks - the park will be on the south side of the street (right) with the entrance just before the corner of Main Street and Division.

 **New MidWest SSTRC Online Store!** <http://www.createchinc.com/store/msstrc/>

MidWest SSTRC Inc. Mission Statement

The MidWest Severe Storm Tracking/ Response Center (*MidWest SSTRC Inc.*) is comprised of members whose primary purpose is to assist in providing early detection of severe weather. We communicate this critical information to government officials, other recognized agencies and organizations including the National Weather Service allowing for timely public severe weather warnings and providing emergency response as appropriate. *MidWest SSTRC Inc. endeavors to assist in any way it can in the protection of life and property from any threat, be it natural or man made.* MidWest SSTRC Inc. is a 501c3 Non-Profit Corporation

MidWest Tracker is a monthly publication of the MidWest Severe Tracking & Response Center, Inc. Your comments are always welcome. Please send any comments and suggestions to Dale Bernstein at dale.bernstein@midwestsstrc.org. Thank you!