



Nautical Musings

by Captain Stan Glatzer

What's Up With The Weather?

No doubt some readers have witnessed sunshine on one side of a street and rain on the other side. How many of us have had similar experiences, where the weather was entirely different from the weather the TV weatherman was describing that was supposedly taking place in our neighborhood? I have been in a dead calm while the forecaster spoke of blustery winds taking place in my vicinity. Though it is important that we are familiar with the TV or radio weather forecast for the foreseeable future when we venture out on our vessels, it is just as important that we can read the signs around us and predict for ourselves the environmental changes about to occur in our immediate location.

Basic familiarity with general weather patterns for your area is always helpful in the understanding of what is the probable direction the weather will travel and whether it looks as though it will pose a threat to your vessel. Your ability to feel, listen, see and smell can help you evaluate local weather. There are definite, though sometimes rather subtle, signals you can recognize that will tip you off as to what kind of weather you will experience in the near future and also give you an indication of how soon it will arrive. The earlier you are able to assess the information, the sooner you are in a position to secure your boat and crew for the onslaught, should it come.

Our geographical location, what the U.S. Coast Guard signifies as the Southern Section of the Northeastern United States, has a rather consistent weather pattern. Our winds are generally from the west, varying to the northwest or southwest from time to time. Cold accompanies a north wind and warmer temperatures come on southerly winds. Winds are named for the direction that they come from. East winds and

south winds tend to bring rain more often than north and west winds.

Low clouds will affect your weather in the immediate future much more severely than high clouds. White puffy clouds are known as "fair weather clouds" unless they are growing rapidly in height and size. Clouds that follow this pattern can develop into a thunderstorm and be accompanied with strong winds. The darker the cloud, the more moisture it contains and the more likely the rain will come if the wind is blowing the clouds toward you. Look upwind, in the direction from which the wind is coming, that is the weather you will experience, not that which is downwind of you.

We are all aware that "blue skies" are great, "gray skies" could be wet, and "black clouds" are squalls with torrents of rain and winds that could be dangerous. There is a color that appears occasionally that can scare the heck out of you. I refer to the slow "greening" of the entire scene, the water, the air and the sky. This is generally experienced first as a calm, heavy, moisture-laden atmosphere, followed quickly with severe 50+ mph winds that whip the water into a gigantic boiling cauldron of waves and spray. Both the squall and what I call "the Green Monster" can appear rapidly, and unless you have been checking your upwind direction regularly, you could be overwhelmed with harsh results. I have witnessed a "Green Monster" hit the Oyster Bay area and go from a 10-to-12-knot wind to smashing boats with a 65-knot gust that ripped them from their moorings in a span of five minutes. There are days when lying in rather calm seas you can, with constant vigilance of the water's surface, be warned when you see whitecaps that occur beneath the oncoming wind.

Temperature will often alert you to ap-

proaching bad weather. The "Green Monster" will be preceded by a slow lowering of temperature, while an oncoming cold front will drop the temperature noticeably in a rather short time. Note: the faster the temperature drops, the stronger the winds will be. If you sense a temperature change, you may be able to ascertain where the wind will come from by closing your eyes and sensing the difference in temperature on one side of your body compared to the other side. You may not realize that Rag Sailors are more prone to noticing these changes earlier than power boaters. Among power boaters, fishermen notice these changes more quickly than others.

Watching a flight of birds will give you a hint of approaching weather, since they will fly high in fair, high-pressure air and skim low when low-pressure or inclement weather is in the offing. You may see the birds congregating in large groups on the water or in a parking lot, facing the prospective wind. Look upwind and see if sailboats are heeling or sailing upright. A sailboat that heels suddenly will warn you of an approaching gust. I have used the following guide for wind speed evaluation and have not been amiss.

- Whitecaps = 12-15 knots.
- Streaks in the water = 18-20 knots.
- Low moan in rigging = 25-28 knots.
- Higher note as wind rises.
- High screaming (sometimes me) = 55+ knots.

Taking a weather course is definitely recommended and will give you a foundation for making your own forecast concerning the next hour or so on the water. A proficient Skipper (S) gathers as much knowledge about the weather as he does concerning his course and speed. Whether you are concerned about the weather or not, the weather can make or break your day.

The New Name In Offshore Fishing

Demand The Difference



Sailfish boats feature proven hull designs, all glass construction, superb fit & finish and an extensive list of standard features.



30-60 CC

Specifications:

- L.O.A.30'6"
- Fuel Cap. 300 Gal.
- Deadrise 22-24 Deg.
- Beam10'



2660 WA

Specifications:

- L.O.A.26'2"
- Fuel Cap. 200 Gal.
- Deadrise 22-24 Deg.
- Beam9'

MOST MODELS IN STOCK • CALL FOR AVAILABILITY

17' - 30' Center Consoles / 21' - 30' Walkarounds

3875 LONG BEACH RD., ISLAND PARK, NY

516-431-1865

WWW.KANDKOUTBOARD.COM



A Family Operated Full Service Marina



When you want the best