



NOAA REPORT

LAURIE E STACKPOLE
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COMING UP

NOAA-sponsored Peoples Republic of China Ocean Leading Group visit to the United States, Sept. 18-Oct. 2.

GOES I-M Program Review at Ford Aerospace and Communication Corp., in Palo Alto, Calif, Sept. 29-Oct. 1.

American Meteorological Society Executive Committee and Council meetings in Boston, Mass., Sept. 30 - Oct. 1.

Joint Gulf and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commissions fall meeting in Key West, Fla., Oct. 19-22.

Soviets Display Remarkable Space Photography:--The Soviet Union recently displayed satellite photographs of earth taken by a 1-meter focal length camera which produces remarkably detailed, 5-meter ground resolution metric photography. By comparison, photographs from the Large Format Camera which flew on the Space Shuttle in 1984, produced 10-meter resolution. Lawrence W. Fritz, chief of the NOS Charting Research and Development Laboratory, reports that samples of the high resolution space photography were discussed and distributed at the International Scientific Colloquium "Space Photography" in Leipzig, East Germany. Fritz, an official of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, sponsor of the colloquium, said that the Soviets also described their comprehensive, integrated remote sensing program which includes cameras and radar from space, and revealed plans for "Soyuz Carta," an enterprise for selling space photography worldwide. As a bonus, the Soviets displayed the first maps of Venus (not previously shown to the West) digitally transmitted from Venera Space missions and processed by radargrammetric methods.

Oil Spill Damage Minimal:--A diesel oil spill from a sunken vessel off San Miguel Island in Southern California which threatened the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary appears to have stopped short of the area and early this week the problem was believed to be abating.

On Sept 21 the vessel Pac Baroness collided with the car carrier Atlantic King off Point Concepcion, Calif., approximately 30 miles north of the sanctuary. The Pac Baroness sank during towing after the accident, spilling its supply of fuel oil into the channel. On Sept 24 the slick's leading edge entered the boundary of the sanctuary heading towards San Miguel Island, a pinniped rookery. Choppy seas over the weekend kept the leaking oil away from the area, however, and the NOAA Hazardous Materials team reports that damage appears to be insignificant in all respects.

Tracking a Killer Storm:--Hurricane Emily is just a memory now, but the second Atlantic hurricane of the season was a killer. Emily developed as a tropical storm just east of the Windward Islands late on the afternoon of Sept. 20. As reported by NOAA's National Hurricane Center, it crossed St. Vincent causing considerable damage, and by late Monday it was upgraded to hurricane status while over the eastern Caribbean. Emily struck the Dominican Republic Tuesday with winds of 125 mph. Three persons were reported drowned and up to 50 percent of the banana and coffee crops destroyed. It lost strength over the mountains of Hispaniola and was downgraded to a tropical storm Sept. 23. After passing over the Bahamas, it accelerated rapidly to the northeast and regained hurricane status Sept. 24. The eye of Emily crossed Bermuda Sept. 25, with hurricane force winds covering the island. The Navy weather station reported a peak wind of 115 mph before the storm spun off out to sea to die in colder northern waters.

NSSL Scientists Honored:--Drs. Richard J. Doviak and Dusan S. Zrnic of the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Okla., are co-recipients of the 1988 Harry Diamond Memorial Award for their contributions to weather radar science. The award, made by the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers is made for outstanding technical contributions in the field of government service in any country in the world. The award will be presented at the IEEE International Geosciences and Remote Sensing Symposium to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in September 1988.

Fire Weather Support Winding Down:--As of late September, seven NOAA air transportable mobile units (ATMU) were providing on-site weather forecasts to fire suppression teams in southern Oregon and California. Seventeen ATMUs have been deployed in the field during this major conflagration, which has charred 1200 square miles since its lightning-caused beginning August 31.

Since that time, all 26 of NOAA's Western Region Fire Weather Offices have provided forecasters to support the fire suppression effort. Seven deaths have been attributed to the fire activity, including those of three persons killed in an air tanker which crashed on Sept. 16.

San Antonio Forecast Office Lauded: On Sept. 10, viewers of national television evening news shows were shown startling film of the toppling of two towers set up at the Papal Mass site in San Antonio, Tex. What the newscasts failed to mention was that the local Weather Service station had issued wind warnings which are credited with saving scores of persons in the area of the towers. The San Antonio, Tex., Weather Service Forecast Office, headed by Jim Ward, received official thanks for a job well done from the Commissioners Court of Bexar County, which said, in part:

"A prime example of the office's importance to our community was given on September 10, 1987, when the (NWS) recognized that a severe weather situation was developing in northwest Bexar County. The timely warning which the Weather Service gave to law enforcement, public works and fire officials, and to local radio and television stations, directly resulted in preventing injury or death to scores of persons who were warned to leave the altar area at the Papal Mass site only minutes before strong winds struck and blew down the twin towers."

Interagency Data Directory Planned:--NOAA, NASA, the National Science Foundation, the Navy, and the U.S. Geological Survey will develop an interagency directory describing data sets from all five agencies, according to NESDIS director Thomas N. Pyke, Jr. Pyke chaired the second interagency session on data management for global change September 18, during which plans for the directory, which will be available electronically through NASA's SPAN network, were made. Strategies for data management, including those for user fees, data catalogues, data collection, and data archiving also were discussed.

World Weather Building Open House:--More than 1,000 persons attended NOAA's open house Sept. 26 at the World Weather Building just outside Washington, D.C. Jointly carried out by NWS and NESDIS, the event preceded by heavy publicity and favored by excellent weather, attracted hundreds of families and many science classes. Other NOAA open house events (not previously reported) include those scheduled on the NOAA ship Heck in Baltimore, Md., ERL in Boulder, Colo., the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich., the NMFS at Sandy Hook, N.J., and Weather Service facilities at Phoenix, Ariz., Houston, Tex., Athens, Ga., and Salem, Oreg.

Constitutional Bicentennial Vignettes:--This is the first of a series of occasional vignettes NOAA Report will carry about the

framing of the Constitution produced by the Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution.

No one man can claim to have written the Constitution of the United States. Much of the Constitution as it was approved in Philadelphia in 1787 first appeared in proposal by Virginia Governor Edmund Randolph, a member of the Convention. But it is likely that many others in the Virginia delegation, such as James Madison, George Washington and George Mason, and some members of the Pennsylvania delegation had a hand in writing the "Virginia plan." But who were these 55 men who gathered almost 200 years ago to write a document that today lives as the oldest written instrument of national government in the world?

To be sure, these men were the "cream of the crop" of revolutionary America. They were learned, monied men. In fact, it is probably safe to say that every American with any knowledge of political science was at the Convention except Thomas Jefferson and John Adams who were on foreign assignment, and John Jay who was doing some work for the Continental Congress. Some of the great names of American history took part in writing the Constitution: George Washington, our first President and hero of the Revolutionary War; Alexander Hamilton, the first Treasury Secretary; James Madison, our fourth President; and Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin has the distinction of being the oldest person at the convention, being 81 years old. But by and large, these were younger men. Only four members of the convention had reached their 60th birthday, including Franklin. Five members were under 30 years old, while some of the leaders, including Madison and Randolph of Virginia were in their early to mid-30's. George Washington, chosen by the Convention as its presiding officer, was 55 years old. The youngest member was Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey, 26 years old.

Given the power and prestige of the men at the Convention, what they wrote is surprising. The constitution provides rights and privileges the powerful had long reserved -- including the right to vote. When the Convention decided not to impose property qualifications on those who serve in the national legislature (Congress), they were acting counter to the qualifications in all of the states at that time. What they were writing was a truly "democratic" Constitution, with the people being given more power than expected. It is that "people power" that has made this country what it is today, and which made the Constitution a document whose preamble can truly begin with the words, "We the People...."

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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Beltsville, MD 20704-1387
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