



Raven's Call

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Upcoming Events

- Earth Day Celebration
Kincaid Park Chalet
Saturday May 5
Noon - 4pm
- NWS Open House
Saturday May 19
8am - 4pm
- Weather Spotter Training
Saturday May 19
10am - Noon
- Alaska State Fair
Raven Hall
Aug. 23 - Sept. 3

Anchorage Forecasters Get Their Sea Legs

By Mike Kutz

Anchorage Forecast Office Meteorologists Louise Fode, Todd Foisy, and Tom Dang accompanied Alaska Region Port Meteorological Officer Larry Hubble and Mobile Emergency Unit member Michael Kutz on two ship weather visits in the Port of Anchorage. The ships visited were the M/V Midnight Sun, an 840-foot long roll-on, roll off container ship with the Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc., and the 679-foot long M/V Horizon Anchorage, a container ship with Horizon Lines. These are two of the top-scoring vessels in the Alaska Region Marine Observation Program, and the National Weather Service Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) Program, and make regularly scheduled freight runs along the US West Coasts en-route to Alaskan Ports at Anchorage, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor (TOTE ships are Anchorage only).

The purposes of the visit were technical

coordination with the Alaska Region Marine Program, and to provide marine outreach experience to the Anchorage Forecast Office staff. Meeting with the M/V Midnight Sun Chief Mate (First Officer) Russell Horton, the WFO Anchorage Meteorologists gained insights into the VOS Program, including a demonstration of the equipment used during observations, vessel operating capacities, and the effects of weather on the ship underway. Viewing the Port of Anchorage and Knik Arm from the bridge 10 stories above the water line served as a magnificent backdrop during their visit.

Speaking with the WFO Anchorage Forecasters, First Officer Horton raised a couple of significant meteorological-operational issues during his demonstrations of shipboard equipment. The first dealt with what he called "ricochet waves" which occurs mostly along the coastal portions of their routes. With significant wind-driven waves pressing shoreward (and

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NWS Builds SKYWARN Across Southcentral Alaska

By Sam Albanese

The Anchorage Amateur Radio Club (AARC) has partnered with the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Anchorage to start SKYWARN over South Central Alaska. The AARC bought and installed HAM radios in the Anchorage

Weather Forecast Office to help support collection of critical weather information during severe weather. Included in this radio set up is Packet Radio that the Anchorage Forecast Office monitors for weather information. The Anchorage

Forecast Office monitors the morning roundup from 0900 to 1030 to pick out weather information commonly exchanged during the round up. To date, the Anchorage office has four licensed HAM radio operators, Dan Peterson,

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Skywarn, Cont'd.

Dave Vonderheide, Scott McKim, and Renee Wise.

Spotter Weather Training was provided by Sam Albanese, the Anchorage Warning Coordination Meteorologist, for the AARC March 17th. A total of seventeen volunteer weather spotters were trained at this session, fourteen in the Anchorage area, two in Palmer and one in Willow, further expanding the volunteer spotter network in south central Alaska.

The Weather Service Office at Kodiak has three HAM radio

operators, Craig Eckert, Dave Stricklan, and Rich Courtney, on station and a radio in the office. Kodiak receives calls from the local HAM operators with spotter reports on snow depth and an occasional wind report. At this time, the Kodiak program is small and informal but there is some interest from the local radio club to participate as spotters during bad weather.

Currently the Anchorage office can only access a two meter relay range. The WFO monitors frequencies through the Susitna and Kenai

transmitters. In the future we would like to expand access by hooking into the Internet Radio Linking Program (ILRP).

If you are interested in becoming a trained weather spotter, or if you are a HAM enthusiast who would like to participate in Skywarn please contact Sam Albanese at sam.albanese@noaa.gov or Renee Wise at renee.wise@noaa.gov for further information.

The Anchorage Forecast Office monitors the morning roundup from 0900 to 1030 to pick out weather information commonly exchanged during the round up.

Sea Legs, Cont'd.

usually perpendicular to the ship's path), the ship is buffeted by waves that have already passed around the ship and ricochet or rebound back to sea from shore. These multi-directional waves combine to cause significant rolling of the vessel while underway, and are difficult to

navigate and sail the best angles to minimize ship rolling. With ship loads rising high above the waves, reducing the roll while maintaining safe operations in the mixed sea condition becomes much tougher. The second meteorological item dealt with getting forecast or observed temperature data through the

Cook Inlet approaches. Temperatures approaching Zero (0) degrees Fahrenheit (F) prevent shipboard equipment from operating, and increases the chances for breakdown during startups. Freezing spray or other cold air precipitation is a hazard on decks, requiring response before dockside work can commence.

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Chief Mate Russell Horton (in safety vest) demonstrates data entry on the AMVERSeas software for the WFO Staff Todd Foisy, Louise Fode, and Tom Dang (Picture by Michael Kutz)

Sea Legs, Cont'd.

Departing the TOTE ship, the Alaska Region personnel almost immediately boarded the M/V Horizon Anchorage, tied of at the next slip. They watched as the ship was being loaded and unloaded during their shipboard orientation with Chief Mate David Crawford. More and different weather perspectives were

discussed during this visit, as well as alternative methods of weather and sea forecasting communications and supplementary information.

The Chief Mates from both ships spoke highly of the accuracy and timeliness qualities of the National Weather Service Marine Forecast Product, with particular emphasis on those received in and around the Alaskan Waters.



Louise Fode, Todd Foisy, Larry Hubble, and Tom Dang are dockside with the M/V Midnight in the Port of Anchorage (Picture by Michael Kutz)

Forecasting From a Different Point of View

By Louise Fode

Recently I had the chance to travel to Juneau to be a part of their forecast operations. The Juneau office was suffering some staffing troubles due to retirements, maternity leave, and other such events, and when they asked for supplemental forecasters from other offices, I jumped at the chance to go. I was able to spend three weeks in Juneau, learning about the forecasting challenges and applying new and different techniques to my forecast.

I was lucky enough (or unlucky enough, if you're not a fan of snow) to be in Juneau during one of the periods this winter when they received a record amount of snowfall. No individual snowfall broke the record when I was there; however, they did receive 57 inches of snow during that three week period. Shortly after I left, they broke their all time winter snowfall record with 194.6 inches for the whole winter. I think the reason I enjoyed the snow so much was

that since I was a guest in the Forest Service building, I didn't have to shovel it!

Juneau has some interesting forecast challenges. The marine community is very large down there, and although the Anchorage Forecast Office has more square mileage of water to forecast for, the Juneau Forecast Office (JFO) has to deal with all the channels and waterways that make up what's known as the Inside Passage. Similar to Anchorage, there are few observation points, and the forecasters in the JFO really rely on mariners to give them an accurate picture with ship observations.

Another interesting part of the forecast process that was really different was the interaction that Juneau has with the Canadian Weather Bureau. Juneau's forecast area shares a large border with Canada, and while a lot of it is unpopulated territory, there are a few places where people read both forecasts, and coordination is necessary. Most notable are

the areas around and just to the north of Skagway and Haines. Of course, these two locations are places where the Al-Can highway crosses the border, and as you might imagine, it's pretty important that the forecasts coordinate. Juneau issues a road forecast for the Al-Can, which includes a similar product issued by the Canadian Weather Bureau for the Canadian side. Since this product goes to both U.S. and Canadian customers, it has to be issued in two formats – one in English units (miles per hour and degrees Fahrenheit) and one in metric units (kilometers per hour and degrees Celsius).

I feel really lucky to have gotten the chance to forecast in another Alaska office. The people in Juneau were warm and friendly, and I challenged my forecasting ability by applying my meteorological knowledge in a new location. Now, I am hoping that they get the chance to send one or two of their forecasters up here, so they can also see what it's like to forecast in someone else's shoes!

"I was able to spend three weeks in Juneau, learning about the forecasting challenges and applying new and different techniques to my forecast.."

NOAA's National Weather Service WFO Anchorage

6930 Sand Lake Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99502
(907) 266-5105

E-mail: renee.wise@noaa.gov

We're on the Web!

<http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov>

Lightning Safety

- ◆ *Move Indoors*
- ◆ *Avoid Standing Beneath Tall Objects or Near Electrical Lines*
- ◆ *Make sure all Appliances are Properly Grounded*
- ◆ *If in the water, move to land as quickly as possible*
- ◆ *If in a car, close all windows*

Encouraging Future Scientists

By Renee Wise

Naknek High School sponsored its first Women in Science Conference in April. Peggy Perales, the Officer in Charge of the King Salmon Weather Service Office organized the event.

I was fortunate enough to be one of the chosen speakers along with Laura Furgione, NWS Alaska Region Director, and representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It was a pleasure to see the good turnout of students both young women and men. The students enjoyed the rare opportunity to explore future career paths in science and to participate in hands on demonstrations of our daily work.

For my part, I explained how forecasters use a variety of data including satellite, radar, ground observations from automated equipment and Weather Spotters, and even photographs of damage to assess the impacts on the environment and weather. Other breakout sessions had the students create sugary "DNA" or track each other using remote sensing tracking collars.

Peggy also partnered with Wells Fargo to offer two 50 dollar savings bonds to two lucky attendees. This will almost guarantee an even bigger turnout for next year's event.



Peggy Perales, OIC of King Salmon WSO addresses students at Naknek High School during the Women in Science Conference.