



CONTENTS

Preface ix
How to Use This Book xi
New to This Edition xiii
Acknowledgments xv

CHAPTER 1: THE BASICS: METEOROLOGICAL ANALYSIS 1

Introduction 1
Measuring the Fundamentals: The Where, the When,
and the Warmth 2
 Spatial Scales: Going the Distance 2
 *Time Scales: Synchronized Sands Through the
 Hourglass* 3
 Temperature Scales: A Matter of Degrees 3
Mathematical Tools: How to Crunch Numbers
and Like It 4
 Converting Units: Just for Good Measure 5
 Scientific Notation: Reform School for Numbers 5
 Statistics: From the Mean to the Extreme 7
Weather Analysis: Spatial Tools 9
 Focus on Optics: Sky Lights 10
 *Topographic Maps: Elevating the Discussion on
 Isoplething* 11
 *Isoplething Weather Data: Seeing the Forest from the
 Trees* 12
 *Caution! Gradient Ahead: Weather Conditions May
 Change Rapidly* 15
 The Station Model: Templates of Local Observations 16
 Weather Folklore and Commentary 20

CHAPTER 2: SOLAR AND TERRESTRIAL RADIATION 35

Introduction 35
Radiation: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly 35
 *The Electromagnetic Spectrum: More Than Meets the
 Eye* 35
 *Temperature and Radiation: The Movers and the
 Shakers* 37
 Balance of Radiation: The Ins and Outs of Energy 38
Heating the Atmosphere, From the Ground Up 40
 The Solar Energy Budget: Savings and Loans 41
 Focus on Optics: Why Is the Sky Blue? 41
 Conduction and Convection: Touch and Go 42

*The Greenhouse Effect: The Major Leagues of
Atmospheric Heating* 43

Satellite Imagery: Look, Up in the Sky, It's a Rocket,
It's a Jet, No It's . . . 45

Visible Cloud Imagery: Say Cheese! 46
 *Infrared Satellite Imagery: It Goes Out Through the
 Atmospheric Window* 48
 Water Vapor Imagery: Near-Sighted Vision 49
 *Guidelines for Interpreting Clouds on Satellite
 Imagery* 50

Radar: Echoes from a Storm (Not a Biography of MASH's
Corporal O'Reilly) 50

Conventional Radar: Boomerang Microwaves 50
 Doppler Radar: Conventional Radar Plus 51

CHAPTER 3: TEMPERATURE 69

Introduction 69
Seasons: Like a Pinball Game, They Depend on Tilt 69
Global Controllers of Temperature: Location, Location,
Location 70
 Latitudinal Gradients: Another Boxing Lesson 70
 Ocean Currents: Giant Gyres that Team with the Wind 71
 Weather Folklore: The Dog Days of Summer 71
 More Uneven Heating: Land Versus Water 72
 *Temperature and Altitude: If Mountaintops Are Closer to
 the Sun, Why Are They Colder?* 73
A First Look at Fronts: At the Leading Edge of
Hot and Cold 75
Temperature Measurement: The Right Way and the
Wrong Ways 76
 Thermometers: Keep Them in the Shade 76
 Weather Folklore: Animal Thermometers 77
 *Focus on Optics: Subsuns and Sun Pillars:
 Magical Mirrors* 79

CHAPTER 4: SURFACE PATTERNS OF PRESSURE AND WIND 93

Introduction 93
Pressure as a Weight: How to Read the Scales 94
 Correction to Sea Level: Getting Rid of Elevation 95
 *Isoplething Sea-Level Pressure: Seeing the Forest from
 the Trees* 96

Circulations of Air Around Highs and Lows: Some are Clockwise, Others are Not 98

Weather Folklore: Of Swallows and Bats 99

Pressure Gradient Force: The Leader of the “Pack” 99

Friction: Whoa Nellie! 100

Apparent Forces: Your Bottom Deceives You 100

Coriolis Force: As the World Turns 101

Surface Air Flow: Diagrams of Football Plays in Meteorology 103

Fronts Revisited: Fitting into the Pressure Pattern 104

Upper-Air Weight Controls: Tipping the Scales 106

Focus on Optics: The Inferior Mirage: A Piece of the Sky 109

CHAPTER 5: PRESSURE AND WIND PATTERNS ALOFT 127

Introduction 127

Pressure Patterns Aloft: A Blueprint of the Sky 127

Patterns of Heights and Isobars Aloft: Telling the Same Story 129

Wind Directions Aloft: Hard-Hat Meteorology 129

The Geostrophic Wind: A Simple Survey of Air in Transit 130

Wind Speeds Aloft: Call the Plumber! 131

Continuity: A Universal Plumbing Principle 131

The Mid-Latitude Jet Stream: A Narrow Pipe Within a Broad Conduit 132

Jet Streaks: Constrictions in Already Narrow Plumbing Pipes 134

CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF WATER IN WEATHER 153

Introduction 153

Hydrologic Cycle: Tortoise and the Hare 153

Water: You Can Check Out, But You Can Never Leave 155

Temperature: The Warden of Evaporation 155

Vapor Pressure Gradient: The Parole Board for Net Evaporation 156

Focus on Optics: The Color of Clouds: Of “Star Trek” and Milk 157

Invisible Moisture: The Gaseous Ghost That Appears as Clouds 157

Recipe for Clouds: A Little Mixing, A Little Cooling 158

Assessing Moisture: Making a Point about Dew Point 161

Weather Folklore: The Hair Hygrometer 164

CHAPTER 7: STABILITY, CLOUDS AND PRECIPITATION 179

Introduction 179

A Test for Buoyancy: The Sky’s the Limit 180

Stability: Nudge and Judge 180

Stability and Instability: Cold or Warm Bottoms 181

Latent Heat of Condensation: Keeping a Balanced Budget 183

Categorizing Clouds and Precipitation:

Stable Versus Unstable 184

Clouds and Precipitation in an Unstable Atmosphere: Heap-Like and Convective 185

Weather Folklore: Making Dew 186

Clouds and Precipitation in a Stable Atmosphere: Layered and Stratiform 187

When Convection Encounters a Stable Layer (or vice-versa): Confrontational Clouds 187

Focus on Optics: The Superior Mirage: Phantom of the Arctic 188

CHAPTER 8: THUNDERSTORMS 201

Introduction 201

Lightning and Thunder: Birthright of the Thunderstorm 201

Lightning Formation: The Shocking Truth 202

Thunder: Atmospheric Rumbles 203

Lightning Safety: Avoiding Hair-Raising Situations 205

Origins of Thunderstorms: To Be, or Not to Be 206

Instability and Lifting: The Preludes to Thunderstorm Development 206

Weather Folklore: Lightning Never Strikes the Same Place Twice 207

Thunderstorm Climatology: Blooming Where You’re Planted 207

Air-Mass Thunderstorms: Convective Classics 210

Structure: A Life in Three Acts 211

The Mesoscale Convective Complex (MCC): Nocturnal Giant of the Plains 213

Thunderstorm Accessories: A Potpourri of Weather Dangers 216

Flash Flooding: The Number-One Thunderstorm Killer 216

Hail: The White Plague 219

Microbursts: Dangerous Breaths from the Skies 222

Postscript: Look Skyward 223

Focus on Optics: Rainbows: Branding the Sky 224

CHAPTER 9: TROPICAL WEATHER, PART I: PATTERNS OF WIND, WATER AND WEATHER 239

Introduction 239

Hadley Cell: Monotonous Cycle 240

Asymmetric Trades: Kinks in the Necklace 241

Speedy Trades: A Hare in a Land of Tortoises 243

El Niño: The Trades Falter 245

The Tropical Eastern Pacific: Normally Chilled 245

El Niño: Changing of the Guard 246

Weather Impacts from El Niño: Near and Far 247

Postscript: Solving the Length-of-Day Mystery 249

Weather Commentary: Abnormal Is Actually Normal 250

CHAPTER 10: TROPICAL WEATHER, PART II: HURRICANES 265

Introduction 265

Hurricanes: The Greatest Storms on Earth 267

Tropical Seas: Fueling Hurricane Engines 267

Low-Level Spin: Engaging Rotary Engines 269

Tuning Heat Engines: Sputtering to Humming 270

Weather Folklore: What a Difference a Day Makes 271

Latent Heat Feedback: Amplifying the Storm 271

Hurricane State Inspection: A Look Under the Hood 272

Subtropical Highs: The Steering Wheel for Hurricanes 274

Hurricane Arsenal: Formidable Foe 275

Hurricanes: Passing the Baton of Heat 276

CHAPTER 11: MID-LATITUDE I: LINKING SURFACE WITH UPPER-AIR PATTERNS 293

Introduction 293

Weight-Conscious Lows: High Intake with Strenuous Exercise 294

Assessing Upper-Air Convergence and Divergence: Air Parcels Become Figure Skaters 294

Upper-Air Vorticity Patterns: Putting a Different Spin on Ridges and Troughs 296

Staying Lean: Keeping the Weight Off 298

CHAPTER 12: MID-LATITUDE II: THE CYCLONE MODEL 317

Introduction 317

Birth of a Low: Which Comes First, the Chicken or the Egg? 317

The First Domino Falls: Upper-Level Divergence 317

Cold and Warm Air Advection: A Follower and a Leader 318

Self-Development: Determining the Destiny of Low Pressure 319

Cold Advection: Dig That Trough! 320

Lows (and Highs) on the Move: Not Helpless Sticks in a Fishing Stream 320

Occlusion: The End of Weight-Watching 322

Cyclone Model Weather: As the Low Goes 324

Weather Ahead of an Approaching Warm Front: Lowering and Thickening Clouds 325

The Cold Conveyor Belt: On the Up and Up 326

Cold Front Weather: Curdling Clouds Above a Wedge of Cheese 326

Dry Conveyor Belt: Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread 328

Focus on Optics: Sun Dogs: Heeling at their Master's Side 330

CHAPTER 13: MID-LATITUDE III: SPAWNING SEVERE WEATHER 363

Introduction 363

Mid-Latitude Lows: Striking the Match That Sparks Severe Weather 363

Vertical Wind Shear: A Referee That Keeps Updrafts and Downdrafts from Clinching 364

Attack Formations of Severe Thunderstorms: Three-Pronged Assault 366

Squall Lines: Nature's Blitzkrieg 366

Derechos: Look Out Loretta! 366

Tornadoes: Last but Not Least 369

Mid-Latitude Lows: To Them, Air Masses Are Mere Pawns 369

Forecasting Tornadoes: Triangulating Targets Around Mid-Latitude Lows 371

Final Perspective on Severe Thunderstorms: The Media and Chicken Little 371

CHAPTER 14: A CLOSER LOOK AT TORNADOES 387

Introduction 387

Land of Tornadoes: There's a Time and a Place 388

Speed Vertical Wind Shear and More Tilting: Upping the Odds for Tornadoes 390

Stretching the Mesocyclone: Atmospheric Aerobics—"Twist, One, Two, Three" 391

May 3, 1999: A Day of Infamy in Central Oklahoma 393

The Chase: Close Encounters of the Tornadoic Kind 394

Chasing Tornadoes: Driving into a Wall 395

Weather Instruments Versus Tornadoes: Getting Blown Away 396

Assessing Tornado Speeds: Giving Up the Chase 397

Tornado Safety: What to Do When a Twister Chases You 398

Chasing Tornado Myths: Elusive Hearsay 398

Waterspouts, Fire Funnels, and Dust Devils:

Whirlwind Cousins 400

Dust Devils: Tasmanian Devil 400

Waterspouts: Tasmanian Devils on the Sea 401

Funnels of Fire: Whirls of Hot Embers 401

Postscript 401

Weather Commentary: Are There More Tornadoes Today? 402

CHAPTER 15: MID-LATITUDE IV: NUMERICAL WEATHER PREDICTION 411

Introduction 411

Computer Simulations: Forecasting Gambit 412

Playing Weather on the Computer: There's No Avoiding "Gridlock" 413

Four-Panel Progs: X's and N's Instead of X's and O's 415

Model Consensus: All for One, and One for All 418

Forecaster's Motto: Know Thy Model's Limitations 419

The Aviation Model: Alternative Computing 421

Medium-Range Forecasting: Sticks in a Stream 421

Medium-Range Forecasting: The Cyclone Model Comes in Handy 422

Ensemble Forecasting: Spaghetti Plots 423

Seasonal Outlooks: Much More Than a Crystal Ball 424

*Statistical Techniques: We End as We Began—
Pattern Recognition* 424

CHAPTER 16: MID-LATITUDE V: OPERATIONAL WEATHER FORECASTING 461

Introduction 461

Temperature Forecasting: Where Have You Gone

Joe DiMaggio? 461

Departures from Climatology: Out of the Ballpark 462

Temperature Forecasting for All Seasons: The Cal Ripkin of Forecasting Techniques 463

Predicting Warm-Season Highs: Like Stealing Signs from the Third-Base Coach 463

Predicting Cold-Season Highs: Relief from the Bullpen 464

Predicting Nighttime Lows: To Bunt or Swing for the Fences? 464

Apparent Temperatures: Heat Index and Wind Chill 467

Precipitation Forecasting During Summer: There's No

Crying in Baseball (or Weather Forecasting) 468

There's Some Order in Chaos: Subtleties of the Game 468

Flash Floods: Suicide Squeeze 469

Forecasting Wintry Precipitation: Snow-Outs Instead of Rain-Outs 471

Forecasting Ice: Sleet Is Winter's Designated Hitter 472

Snowstorms: Like a Baseball Field, There Needs to be a "Dug Out" 474

Predicting Snow Accumulations: Stepping Up to the Plate With the Game on the Line 475

Forecasting Lake-Effect Snow: Like Trying to Hit a Knuckle Ball 477

Postscript: Apprentice Weather Forecasting 479

CHAPTER 17: THE HUMAN IMPACT ON WEATHER AND CLIMATE 497

Introduction 497

The Enhanced Greenhouse Effect: Too Much of a Good Thing? 498

Carbon Dioxide: Better Watch Where You Put Your Carbon 498

Other Greenhouse Gases: Carbon-Copy Warming 500

Temperature Trends Over the Last Century: More Ups Than Downs 502

Global Warming: A Result of the Enhanced Greenhouse? 503

Future Trends: Modeling into the Unknown 505

Ozone Depletion: Not Enough of a Good Thing? 507

Weather Commentary: Why the Greenhouse Effect Is NOT Like a Blanket 507

Ozone: A Primer 508

CFCs: Revisited 508

The Antarctic Ozone Hole: Cold and Alone 510

A Wider View of Ozone: Global Trends 511

Land Use Change: Impact on Weather and Climate 513

Deforestation: Cutting Across Natural Cycles 513

The Climate of Cities: Islands unto Themselves 514

Closing Thoughts: The Speed of Change 516

Focus on Optics: Red Skies and Volcanoes: Twilight Tides of Erupting Crimson 517

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL PRINT RESOURCES 527

GLOSSARY 531

INDEX 543