

STORMY Weather

SU Alumnus Mike Seidel (Mathematics/ Geography, '79) began measuring snow when he was 6 years old and growing up in Salisbury. By the time he was in high school his hobby gained a broadcasting job: his first words on the radio were a weather forecast in 1973. His first TV weather gig was at WMDT in Salisbury in 1980. Following graduate school at Penn State (M.S. Meteorology, '83) he entered the world of TV weathercasting full time, ending up at The Weather Channel in Atlanta in 1992.

What is a typical day like on the road covering stormy weather? The day sometimes stretches to 20 hours, usually in very poor weather. In December 2001, he was sent to Buffalo, NY, to report its record-setting 7-feet of snow for 85 million Weather Channel viewers and millions of others watching on ABC. Here are excerpts from Seidel's diary from Friday, December 28, 2001:



A Day On The Road With The Weather Channel's Mike Seidel

4:45 a.m. The alarm goes off. I throw three layers on plus my Gore-Tex jacket with liner.

5:15 a.m. I make my first call to The Weather Channel (TWC). I'll be doing live shots every half hour, all day.

5:30 a.m. Time to head out to TWC's live truck.

6 a.m. The first shot goes off without a hitch and we're off and running!

6:15 a.m. I'm showing viewers in Washington, D.C., all that snow.



6:40 a.m. We hook up our communications with ABC's "Good Morning America."

7:10 a.m. GMA's George Stephanopoulos tosses to me. Between shots of me digging out cars and tromping through the snow, they'll drop in additional video and graphics explaining lake-effect snowfall.



8 a.m. Once again, George Stephanopoulos tosses to me and this time I hike up a mountain of snow in a parking lot, almost disappearing!



8:30 a.m. TWC live shot. I then get a chance to dash and get some breakfast.

8:54 a.m. GMA has me back to say good-bye, as I'm buried in a mountain of snow.

9:05 a.m. ABC News One calls and I'll record the audio for the story that will be available on its national feed for any of the 215 ABC affiliates.

Interacting With The Weather

9:20 a.m. KABC-TV (Los Angeles) live shot.

9:35 a.m. KTVK-TV (Phoenix) live shot. I do a lot of work with them and morning anchor Tara Hitchcock has me doing snow angels, among other wacky things.

10-11 a.m. TWC live shots every half hour.

11:30 a.m. TWC live shot, followed by a break until 2 p.m. During that time I relax a bit, grab lunch, call the family and get geared up for the afternoon.

2 p.m. TWC every half hour live shots resume.

4 p.m. TWC live shot with a glitch. Everything I say is being fed back into my ear a little over a second later. The trick is to try to ignore the echo effect.

4:15 p.m. I talk to ABC's "World News Tonight" producer Alice Maggin about the coverage I'm doing at 6:30 p.m.



4:45-5:20 p.m. Live shots: WPLG (Miami), WLS (Chicago), WTVG (Toledo), WPLG (Miami), WXYZ (Detroit), WABC (New York).

5:25 p.m. WJLA (D.C.) live shot. Anchor tosses to me with "Mike, do you think the snow will stick around for the weekend?" Now remember it's Friday and it snowed seven feet this week. You have to be ready for anything when you're live!



5:30-5:50 p.m. Live shots: WATE (Pittsburgh), WHAS (Louisville), WSB (Atlanta), WTEN (Albany).

5:55 p.m. I dash back to the truck, giving my toes a chance to warm up a bit after 90 minutes in the 20-degree weather.

6:05-6:30 p.m. Live shots: KETV (Omaha), WTEN (Albany), WSB (Atlanta).



6:40 p.m. Elizabeth Vargas, filling in for Peter Jennings, tosses to me. I toss it back to Elizabeth, she thanks me and the marathon is over. Fifteen live shots in two hours and terrific visibility for The Weather Channel. I step inside the warmth of the truck for about 15 minutes. Wearing the layers paid off, but my toes are ice cold!

7 p.m. Now it's back to The Weather Channel coverage every 30 minutes until 11 p.m. with only a quick break for dinner.

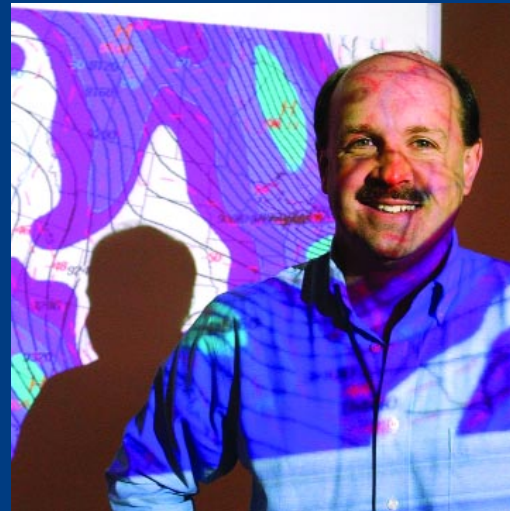
8:30-11 p.m. TWC live shots as the temperature falls into the upper teens, we show the records that were shattered:

- Snowiest month on record: 82.7" with 81.5" falling in five days and 48.1" falling in the past two!
- Snowiest 24-hours: 35.4" (Dec. 27-28)
- Greatest snow depth: 44" (Dec. 28)

11:30 p.m. I'm back in my room.

12:30 a.m. Asleep.

Dr. Brent R. Skeeter '82, explains some of the technological advances in the Geography and Geosciences Department in the new Henson Science Hall: "Ten years ago, I would photocopy black and white weather maps for the students. Now we have two labs with 24 computers, and I can project what is on their screen onto a



larger screen so the class discussion can be much more interactive and meaningful. We can now get hundreds of different weather maps from different sources and can look at surface vs. upper atmosphere in real time, or yesterday's weather vs. today's. The new technology enables students to find out if meteorology is really what they want to pursue as a career, and if so, it increases their chances of getting into graduate school."

