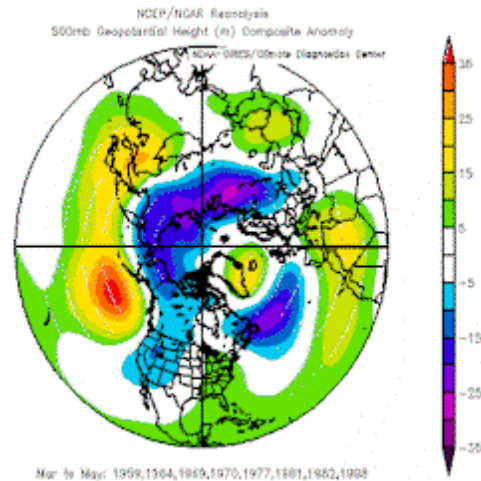


The Pennsylvania Observer

The Pennsylvania State Climatologist



January Climate Highlight:

January's Climate Highlight features a letter written by the Observing Program Leader at the National Weather Service in State College, Paul Head, which honors the dedication and hard work of COOP observer, Ray Single.

The National Weather Service at State College gave the John Campanius-Holm Award for 2010 to Ray Single of Dunlo, PA. Ray has spent more than 25 years as the COOP observer from Dunlo, PA. Ray has worked tirelessly for his family and community for even longer than he has cared for our National Weather Service Standard 8 inch rain gage and a Fisher Porter Rain Gage. He not only keeps our gages operating, he measures snowfall, snow depth, and snow water equivalent for us during the colder months.

Last spring, Paul Head spoke with Ray's wife Rose, his sister Joyce Baker, and several of Ray's neighbors and friends. Through these conversations, he pieced together a picture of a truly devoted family man.

Ray was a Baltimore City Fireman for a few years. Despite making a good living and being good at what he did, Ray knew that inner city Baltimore was not the place to raise a family or for his young children to go to school. In 1969 Ray and Rose brought their growing family to the small community of Dunlo, PA. For them it was coming home. Rose's dad and Ray's parents lived nearby supported by the nearby coal mine.

Ray worked in the axle plant in Johnstown. During those first years home he built his own house, working every day after work, except Sunday. The skills necessary to build, he learned from books, teaching himself everything from foundations to plumbing to roofing. Once the house was built, he built a small barn and tinkered in the yard, building the kids sand boxes, a swing set, and a tree house.

Not to stay idle, he used the skills learned in Baltimore to teach firefighting skills at the Dunlo Volunteer Fire Department. He remained a fire fighter for many years and just recently decided to "let the younger guys have a go at it".

Ray has always been interested in music and learned to play guitar and bass. Frank Reffner, his guitar teacher, told me he plays with a band that does polkas and weddings. He also told me that Ray is a true good Samaritan. Recently, just after one of the big February snowstorms of last winter, Ray went to Frank's home at 6 AM and shoveled out his driveway, so Frank could get to a doctor's appointment in Pittsburgh. This is just one of many testimonials Paul received from people as he canvassed Ray's neighborhood.

Rich Barelich says Ray and Rose have been married for 47 years. They have three grown children and six grandchildren aged six to fourteen.

Joyce Baker, Ray's sister, says Ray was featured in the Johnstown Magazine as a neighborhood fixit man.

The Dunlo Cooperative Observing site had been founded by Daisy White in 1978. When Daisy passed away in 1985, Ray volunteered to take her place. He has been faithful to this daily task for 25 years, never missing a day. When unusual weather events take place he is on the phone to me. He diligently checks the Fisher Porter gage, especially after repairs, to minimize down time. His B-91s, although still written, are legible and contain virtually no errors.

The following is a testimonial to a testimonial from Frank Reffner. I, Paul Head, was making my spring visit and found Ray at a neighbor's house digging a huge hole by hand. He was sweating in the hot sun, digging a hole for an above ground swimming pool. I helped him with a level I had in the van to show how much further he had to dig. When I returned in the fall, the pool was installed and Ray chastised me for the cool summer we'd had. Ray took no compensation of any kind for the pool installation or for anything else he has done for his neighbors and family.

Ray works tirelessly for his family and neighbors. He also works tirelessly for the National Weather Service. The combination of community service and the accuracy of his observations elevate Ray above the crowd. Ray Single has given so much to his community and his nation through the COOP program. It is for this reason Ray Single received the John Campanius-Holm Award for 2010.