



BLIZZARD HITS ON THE 7TH

During January 6-8, the "Blizzard of 1996" buried our area with 10" of snow at Whaleysville on the Eastern Shore to 36" of snow at Eagle Rock in Western Maryland. Winds gusts of 50 or higher were reported at Odenton, Baltimore, Owings Mills, Millers, in Maryland and at Bear DE. The peak gust of 58 MPH was recorded in Manchester by Herb Close. The strong winds made snowfall measurement difficult due to blowing snow and heavy drifting.

Annual Group Gathering Held on Saturday, January 6th.

The forecast of the pending snowstorm provided another conversation subject at our annual winter gathering on Saturday the 6th. Many of our observers from suburban Washington, Baltimore, Northern Delaware and Carroll County gathered at the home of Herb Close in Manchester for an afternoon and evening of "weather talk." Some of us returned home just as the snow began to fall.

Wet, Snowy Month

Temperatures for the month averaged slightly below normal while precipitation was well above normal. Almost all of the snow fell during the second week of the month melted during the third week. The second week was also the coldest. The last half of the month saw temperatures rise briefly to the 50's only to be followed by much colder weather the next day.



Up to three feet of snow in the driveway of Herb Close of Manchester MD half buries his car.

Floods Hit Area on the 19th

Rain along with a rapid snow melt caused the worst flooding in many areas since Hurricane Agnes in 1972. This year the January Thaw occurred just after a cold period which left record or near record amounts of snow on the ground. Mild temperatures and very moist air generated heavy fog in many areas from the 17th to 19th. The passage of a strong cold front on the 19th brought an end to the melting snow while dropping temperatures over 40 degrees at many stations bringing back winter.

The following observers reported winds gusts in excess of 50 MPH: Kenney Boggs of Whaleysville - 50 MPH, Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills - 51 MPH, and Marty Brumback of Odenton whose peak gust was 54 miles per hour.

24 to 30 inches of snow covered the ground in many areas on the 12th. By the evening of the January 19th, many areas had lost all of their snow-cover. Many stations throughout the region lost over a foot of snow alone on the 18th & 19th.

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Observers Monthly Highlights

JANUARY
1996

Dan Hanson of Millersville 1 S

6th - 12th Incredible week of snow: 32.1"

19th Rapid snow melt due to warm temperatures and heavy rain. Snow piles "steamed" with dew point of 55

Dan Hanson of Baltimore 4 SW

6th - 12th Incredible week of snow: 37.8"

19th Rapid snow melt due to warm temperatures and heavy rain. Snow piles "steamed" with dew point of 58

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

7th 2AM light snow visibility 1 mile decreasing to 1/4 mile by 11AM. Heavier snow, visibility down to 1/16 mile at noon, zero at 1:15PM. Medium to heavy snow all afternoon. Average temperature 12 deg. 6PM snow and pellets along with blowing and drifting snow. 11:30PM 36" drift on deck, 4 ft on driveway

8th 6AM 25" on ground, much blowing. All doors except front blocked by at least 24" of snow. I-83 closed.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

Blizzard conditions prevailed from early on the 7th through midday on the 8th. Record snowfall totals throughout the area.

Joseph Manfre of Baltimore 2 SE

A snowy and cold month. Blizzard of 1996

Herb Close of Manchester 1 SW

Biggest snow storm to hit Carrol Co. in 38 years since March 1958 when 30 - 34" fell. The Blizzard of 1996 dropped 30" in 36 hours; created drifts up to 6ft in my back yard. During the blizzard snow fell nearly horizontal throughout the storm with NE / N winds 15-40 MPH, Gusts 40-55 MPH. Peak wind gust was 58. Frigid temp & bitter cold wind chills. Temp all morning to mid-day only 10 to 11. Temp rose to mid teens by evening. 40.5" fell in 6 days

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE

8th 8 foot drift in front of garage. Spent 25 minutes shoveling a path to retrieve 8" precipitation can.

19th Gunpower River over banks by 3 - 4 feet.

January was the wettest in area since 1979 and one of the snowiest on record.

Paul Schlosser of Kingsville 1 S

32.7" - Greatest one week snowfall ever observed.

7th-9th - 3rd greatest signal snowstorm evert

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N

Snowest month ever observed in the area (1966-1996)

Stan Rossen of Glenmont 1 NNE

This month was snowy, wet with temperatures averaging just a hair below normal. It was the snowiest Jan ever recorded (31.1") and the second snowiest month on record.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

Snowiest January on record. 2nd snowiest of any month (35.0" in 2/79 holds the station record.

Jeff Taylor of Germantown 1.5 SW

7th Stations all-time single day snowfall record. Temp less than 16 thru most of the storm.

19th Heavy fog and rain. 8" of snow melts.

Floyd Abell of Hollywood

Cold, Sleet, Glaze, Snow White and the Seven Days

The week from Jan 6-12 featured the worst winter weather in St Marys Co. since the big ice storm on Feb 11, '94. We had accumulating snow on five of those seven days, three days with sleet and one with freezing rain. The 18.5" snow accumulation measured at Floyd's Weather Station on the 8th made it the 3rd biggest snowstorm of modern day records.

But that was far from the end of it. During the afternoon of the 9th a flurry got out of hand and we had an additional 3". During the morning of the 12th a new storm brought 3.8" of snow before changing to sleet and freezing rain. That freezing rain brought a reminder of the big Feb 11th ice storm. Thank goodness it only lasted a few hours.

Finally on the morning of the 13th the sun shone bright, the temperature went above freezing and the big recuperating process started.

The most January snow at FWS is 28.8" in 1987.

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

19th Overnite temps remained in the 50's. Fog rolled off the rapidly melting snowcover which went from 13" to 3" today. Extremely heavy rains and melting snow caused widespread flooding of all streams and creeks.

20th Area creeks and rivers crested today with the worst flooding since 1985. The Potomac at Williamsport MD crested 34.8' (flood stage 23', 1985 was 36.3') Nearby Antietam creek caused wide spread flooding then froze making an even bigger mess.

Some records set this month: Wettest Jan in history 7.71" (Old 6.68" in 1979), snowiest Jan and the snowiest for any month 42.9" (Old set in 1925 with 33.0"), most snow in a 24 hour period 26" (Old 25" set 2/11/83), all time storm snowfall of 35" (Old 25" set 2/11/83), greatest snow depth on the ground of 34" (Old record was 25" in 1983)