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OFFER EXPIRES MAY 31, 1985

# Lightning strikes in deadly way

By **JUNE PANG**  
Staff Writer

With the arrival of May, people receive pleasant gifts from mother nature; sunshine, breezes and warm weather. However, they also have to accept other things such as thunderstorms, tornadoes and lightning.

"Lightning kills more people than floods, hurricanes or tornadoes," says Ron Stagno, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Houston. "It's the number one weather killer."

"You don't hear much about it, because most of the time they kill individuals instead of groups of people," Stagno says. "Those killings are buried at the back page of newspapers."

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, lightning kills about 125 people nationwide every year. Texas and Florida have the most thunderstorms in the country, and the highest number of deaths due to lightning, the center said. 25 to 30 people in Texas alone are killed by lightning every year.

Generally, Texas has more thunderstorms from April to August. July and August are the two peak months for thunderstorms in the Texas coastal area.

Lightning occurs because of a discharge of electricity between the base of a cumulonimbus cloud and the earth's surface. A cumulonimbus cloud is the black cloud present during a thunderstorm.

As the cloud develops, interaction of charged particles produce an intense electrical field within the cloud. The negative charge in the base of the cloud induces a positive

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charge on the ground below.

The strong attraction between the negative charge in the cloud and the positive charge on the ground causes them to seek a way to meet each other through the shortest and the path of least resistance. Lightning occurs when the two charges meet.

"Our forefathers used lightning rods when they built houses," says Dr. Kenneth Brundidge, an A&M meteorology professor. "But now many houses don't have lightning rods any more because we have water pipes. They are good conductors that can lead electricity into the ground."

Appliances inside houses can be effected by lightning, he says. This is because they are installed close to walls hit by lightning and the walls may not have water pipes. Also, wires are good conductors, Brundidge says.

All metals are good conductors of electricity, so houses with metal frames or water pipes in the wall have the same protection as those with a lightning rod, Brundidge says. For the same reason, staying inside an all metal vehicle with windows closed is a good way to avoid being struck by lightning, he says.

People should stay away from metal pipes, tractors, golf clubs, golf carts, fishing rods or bicycles during storms, he says. If a person is too close to them, electricity can jump off an object and onto a person,

Brundidge says.

According to the NOAA a 16-year-old boy was killed by lightning while walking along a railroad track in Tampa, Fla. In another case, an Iowa woman was struck when she ran outside to close her car windows.

When different electrical charges in the cloud and on the ground attract each other, any tall item becomes a good conductor. People should avoid standing near tall trees, telephone poles and hilltops.

If a person is caught out in a level field, far from shelter and he feels

his hair standing on end, lightning may be about to strike. To avoid electrocution, a person should lie flat on the ground with his hands on his knees. That will make him part of the ducting surface — the ground.

Persons struck by lightning receive a severe electrical shock. They may be burned, but they can survive. Even someone who is killed by lightning can be revived promptly.

If a victim is not breathing, aid should be rendered immediately to prevent irreversible damage to the brain. A person should give first aid mouth-to-mouth resuscitation once every five seconds to adults and small children, until medical help arrives.

## What's up

Wednesday

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT—STUDENT SERVICES:** will sponsor a Book Exchange during finals week, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in 214 Pavilion.

**MSC TRAVEL:** will meet at 7 p.m. in 604 Rudder to furnish information on the Summer China Trip.

Thursday

**ASIAN—AMERICAN ASSOCIATION:** invites everyone to their End-of-School Dance on Thursday from 8 p.m. to midnight at MSC Rumours.

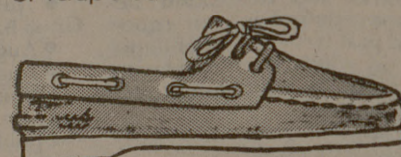
**Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three days prior to desired publication date.**

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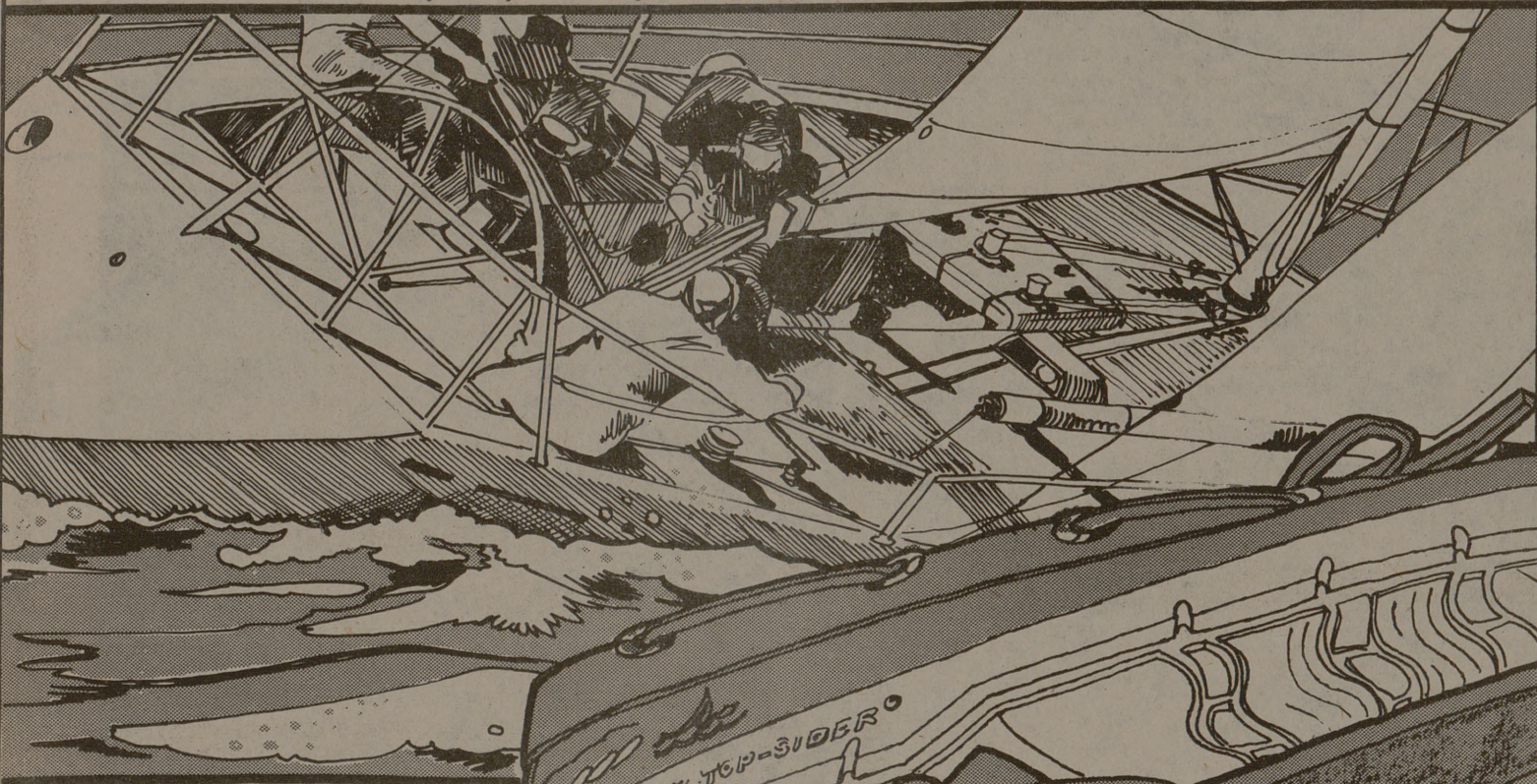
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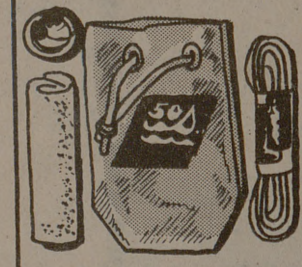


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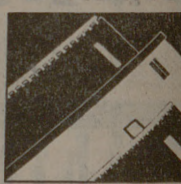
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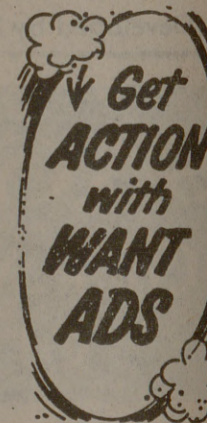
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