

Winter Season Recap  
Meteorologist Paul Kocin speaks at Kean University

By: Tasha Anderson

With only a few more weeks of winter remaining, some might say that this winter has been a bit harsh – but has it? Just ask meteorologist, author and winter weather expert Paul Kocin, who spoke at Kean University on February 19, 2009 at the request of the Student Chapter of the AMS/NWA (Student Org). His presentation “Northeastern New Jersey Winter Storms in a Changing Climate” brought out a crowd of more than 100 people. The vibrant and often comedic Kocin spoke about previous winter storms as well as current hits and misses. He discussed the associated impacts in the northeastern portion of the nation and shared numerous pictures and weather maps to illustrate each storm’s history.

Kocin, whose books *Northeast Snowstorms- Volume 1- Overview*; and *Volume 2- The Cases* written with co-author Dr. Louis Uccellini, Director of NCEP; have become prominent in the professional community. Kocin and Uccellini developed a scale to classify snowstorm intensity on a range of one to five known as the Northeast Snowfall Impact Scale (NESIS). The NESIS allows for emergency managers and others to plan for and manage the multiple hazards and impacts associated with winter storms including: snow, cold, wind, coastal flooding, and their effects on lives and property. Based on this scale three of the top five ranked storms have occurred since 1993 and one of those three was the Blizzard of 1996. If you were looking for another day off from school or work due to a major snowstorm this season, the odds might not be in your favor – but according to Kocin “I’m looking to be surprised.”

So what about this winter we’ve been having? The season began with a late October heavy snow that left places such as High Point, NJ with over 13 inches of snow. Since then temperatures were slightly above normal in December and a few degrees below normal in January. Snowfall for the season has been near normal, but February – typically the snowiest month on average – has seen little of the white stuff. This may be symptomatic as Kocin noted seasonal snowfall totals have trended downwards and we have been seeing much milder winters over the last fifty years. According to Kocin, “The storm is the signal of the change that is going on.”

The free seminar was hosted by the Student Chapter of the AMS/NWA at Kean University. Its mission is to educate the campus community on various atmospheric phenomena such as thunderstorms, hurricanes and lightning through media, print material, guest speakers, and activities. The chapter collected 165 pounds worth of canned goods and non-perishable products in support of the presentation to be donated to the local food bank in Union.

*Story prepared by Tasha Anderson (Meteorology Major) with assistance and direction from Dr. Paul J. Croft (Meteorology Faculty). Information is provided through the Center for Earth System Education, the Department of Geology & Meteorology (<http://hurri.kean.edu>), at Kean University. If you would like more information or have questions please call us at 908-737-3728; or email us at [wemapit@kean.edu](mailto:wemapit@kean.edu).*

See picture below [officers with Paul Kocin]



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