

## ***Flat Stanley Visits the National Weather Service in Ruskin, Florida April 14th-21, 2009.***

Flat Stanley is a character in the book *FLAT STANLEY* by Jeff Brown. The book is about a boy named Stanley who is accidentally squished as flat as a pancake when a bulletin board falls on him. Stanley is very flat but fine. Stanley discovers some advantages to being flat including being able to be folded and mailed to exciting vacations where he learns about different places and people.

Mrs. Barbara Hull's first grade class at New Britton Elementary School in Fishers, Indiana contacted the Tampa Bay Area National Weather service office in Ruskin, Florida and asked if we could host Flat Stanley. Flat Stanley takes long journeys to help children learn about the world. His current visit encompasses over 2100 miles round trip from Indiana to Florida and back.



The National Weather Service is a wonderful place to learn about science. We issue many different types of forecasts including those for the media, foresters, pilots, mariners, and more. We not only forecast the weather but also issue weather warnings and statements for significant weather occurrences such as tornadoes and strong winds. We also investigate damage after severe weather strikes and research ways to improve our forecasts and warnings. We use computer programs to help us more effectively do our daily work and many computer programs are developed in our office. We work with TV and media weather people who help spread the word about the weather. We also work with emergency managers who make serious decisions to evacuate people when hurricanes threaten. Launching weather balloons that carry radiosonde instruments is one of the fun activities at the office. These balloons travel to the edge of our atmosphere then pop and drift back to earth with a parachute.

West Central Florida has some of the most interesting weather in the country! We have more thunderstorms and deadly lightning than any other part of the country. During summer those daily thunderstorms often create small tornadoes and waterspouts that cause damage. Waterspouts are just tornadoes over the water. During our winter or cool season, tornadoes that develop may be very strong and dangerous. During the cool and dry season freezing temperatures damage winter crops. When skies are sunny as they often are, wildfires can be a problem. Almost every year hurricanes and tropical storms threaten Florida. People in the Tampa Bay area are lucky though. The last major hurricane to hit was 1921. A major category 4 hurricane has the potential to flood our tidal areas with over 20 feet of water!

Flat Stanley arrived at our National Weather Service office in an envelope with instructions to dress him and engage him in weather office activity. We dressed him in a shirt made from a thermograph chart, added NWS and NOAA logos to his shirt and gave him matching trousers and cap. His first day was busy. Once dressed, Flat Stanley issued tornado warnings and then did a storm survey of the tornado damage. That night he was a special guest at our annual AMS banquet. Stanley had a very busy but fun week. The pictures on the following pages show Flat Stanley's activities at our National Weather Service office.

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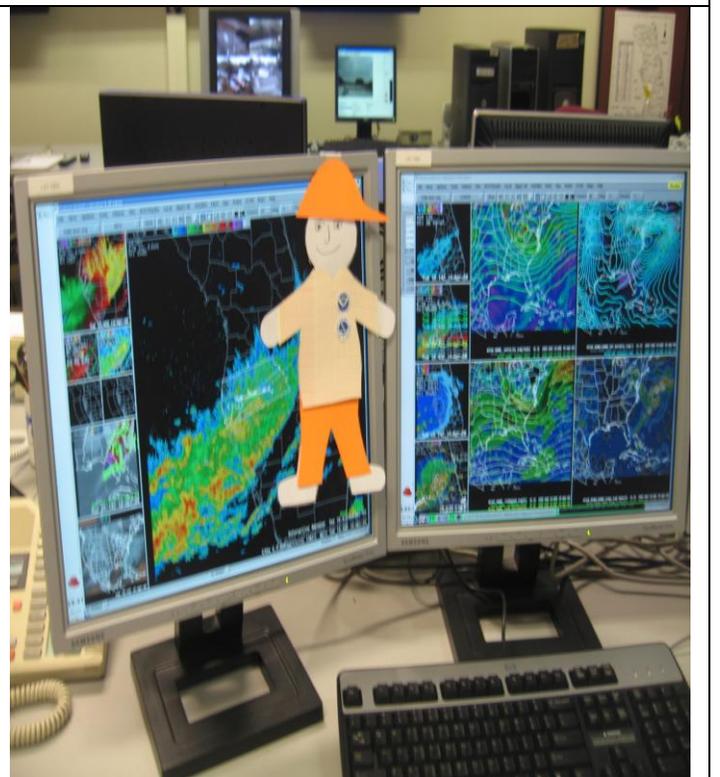
Flat Stanley arrives at the NWS office and greets meteorologist Nicole Carlisle.



Flat Stanley greeting Administrative Support Assistant Karen Brown.



Flat Stanley arrives inside the office with Science and Operations Officer Charlie Paxton.

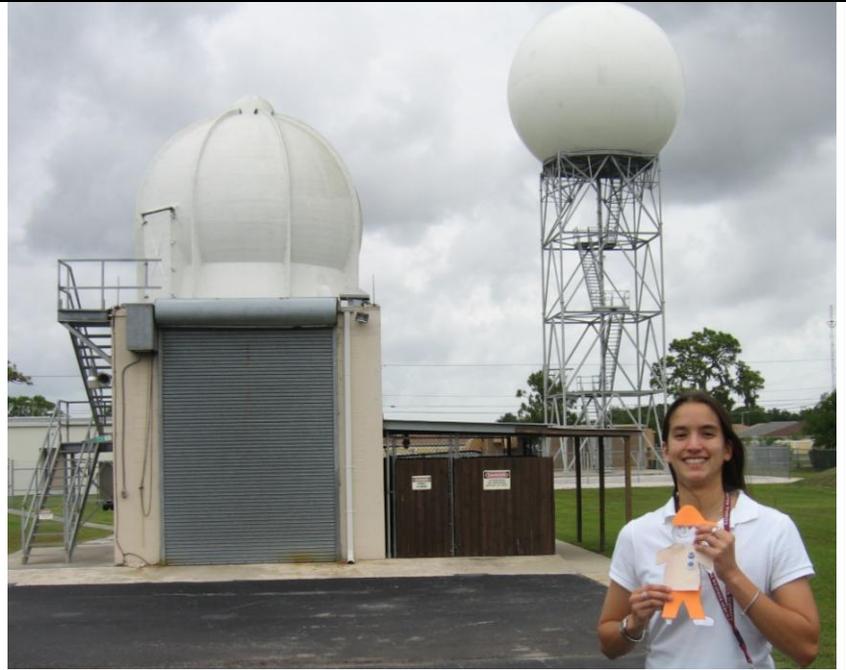


Flat Stanley issuing a tornado warning.

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Flat Stanley sitting on the Doppler radar dome



Flat Stanley with meteorologist Nicole Carlisle looking at the balloon inflation shelter and Doppler radar dome.



Flat Stanley was a big celebrity at the American Meteorological Society Banquet.



Stanley watches Forensic meteorologist Michelle Campbell speak at the AMS banquet.

See more information about our office at <http://weather.gov/tampa> then click on "About us" on the left side

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Flat Stanley has his morning cup of coffee with the electronics technicians.



Flat Stanley working on computer equipment in the back room.



Flat Stanley fixing a Fisher-Porter rain gauge.



Flat Stanley watching the weather.

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Flat Stanley about to fill a weather balloon with flammable hydrogen.



Flat Stanley and the weather balloon.



Flat Stanley checking the parachute.



Flat Stanley taking the ride of his life!