

NOVEMBER 1996: For the second consecutive November, abnormally cold conditions gripped the Washington/Baltimore area. Monthly temperature departures of -5°F and lower were reported at the three major airports. November marked the 11th month of the last 13 with subnormal temperatures at DCA. There were 24 days with cooler than normal conditions at DCA, including the first freeze of the season (32°F on the 12th) and a day when highs only reached the middle 30's (35°F on the 28th). Lows plunged into the teens across many suburban locations around mid-month and again toward the end of November, including both BWI (16th & 28th) and IAD (16th, 17th, 28th & 29th). This was the first such November occurrence in 5 years for both airports and reflect readings more typical of mid-winter. A few daily record lows were established at BWI (13th, 16th & 17th) and one at IAD (28th). Although late-season warmth was only limited to a few days, readings did top 70°F on two days (7th & 8th) at DCA, but both days were accompanied by cloud cover.

Monthly precipitation totals were above normal across most of the area and at 4 of the 5 airports. The majority of the rain occurred from two events. The first was a strong storm system that dumped up to 3 inches of rain across portions of the local area (over 2 inches at DCA, BWI, and IAD), generated strong winds, and caused some small stream and localized urban flooding. The second major precipitation event occurred from the 25th-26th when up to an inch of rain fell across parts of the area. For many areas, November marked the fifth consecutive month with a rain event of more than one inch and at DCA it was the 8th month this year with above normal precipitation. The first snowfall of the year occurred on the 14th with less than an inch recorded at most locations.

NOVEMBER 1996 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

| Station Location | Temperatures ($^{\circ}\text{F}$) | | | | | Extreme/Day | | Precipitation (In) | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------|--------|------|
| | AvMx | AvMn | AvgT | NmIT | DepNml | MaxT | MinT | Total | Norm | DepNml | Snow |
| National (DCA) | 51.5 | 36.7 | 44.1 | 49.8 | -5.7 | 72/8 | 26/28 | 3.58 | 3.12 | +0.46 | T |
| Baltimore (BWI) | 50.0 | 30.4 | 40.2 | 46.8 | -6.6 | 73/7 | 18/28 | 3.77 | 3.32 | +0.45 | 0.3 |
| Dulles (IAD) | 48.8 | 29.8 | 39.3 | 45.4 | -6.1 | 73/8 | 16/16 | 3.75 | 3.30 | +0.45 | 0.7 |
| Ft. Belvoir (DAA) | 53.1 | 32.8 | 43.0 | N/A | N/A | 75/8 | 21/16 [#] | 3.99 | 3.0 | +1.0 | T |
| Andrews AFB (ADW) | 50.0 | 31.9 | 41.0 | N/A | N/A | 72/7 [*] | 21/15 [@] | 2.46 | 3.3 | -0.8 | T |

Other Occurrences: * November 8th; # November 28th and 29th; @ November 16th, 28th, and 29th.

AUTUMN (September–November) 1996: Like the four previous seasons, cooler and wetter than normal conditions prevailed in Washington. Seasonal temperature departures were between -2°F and -3°F at the three major airports, with the largest departure reported at BWI (-2.8°F). There were 58 days with subnormal temperatures at DCA, with the most (24) occurring in November. Autumn commenced in the middle of a hot spell as highs soared near 90°F each of the first 10 September days. After that, cooler than normal weather dominated during the last two-thirds of the month, and September ended with below normal temperatures at DCA for the seventh consecutive year. October provided a touch of Autumn's chill as well as a bit of "Indian Summer" warmth. Unusually cool conditions prevailed from the 3rd-12th and featured the first frost or freeze for many suburban locations. IAD was the only airport of the five to record a subfreezing low (31°F on the 12th). A brief warm spell around mid-month and again during the later third produced readings in the low eighties on the 17th and again on the 30th at many locations. Daily record highs were observed at both DCA and IAD on the 30th as readings soared to 82°F and 81°F , respectively. Despite these brief periods of warmth, monthly temperature departures at most locations were slightly below normal. The final month of Autumn ended much the way it did in 1995, with unusually cold weather and monthly departures below -5°F . Some of the lowest November readings in 5 years were reported at many locations as minimum temperatures dropped into the teens. DCA (the urban heat island) recorded a monthly low of 26°F on the 28th while both BWI and IAD observed a few days with readings in the teens, something that hasn't occurred at either location in November since 1991.

Autumn precipitation was above normal across most of the local area and for the fifth consecutive season at most locations. Each of the three months featured above normal precipitation totals at four of the five airports, with September being the wettest (> 7 inches at DCA, IAD, and DAA). In fact, September was the wettest ($7.79''$) such month in more than 20 years at DCA and the second wettest ever recorded at the airport. The most significant precipitation event during September was rainfall associated with the remnants of Hurricane Fran on the 6th. This system generated more than 3 inches of rain across parts of the local area (over a foot in the Virginia mountains), strong winds and induced severe flooding along numerous streams and rivers. Rainfall earlier in the month and that associated with Fran produced totals of 5 inches during the first week of September for many locations. Two strong storm systems in October contributed to above normal monthly totals. First, the remnants of another tropical system (Josephine) on the 8th dumped about an inch of rain across the region. About ten days later, a Nor'easter slowly moved up the Atlantic Coast, generating up to 2 inches of rain and wind gusts up to 50 mph. The combination of these two events and additional October rainfall pushed 10-month totals at most locations above the annual normals. The season closed with slightly wetter than normal conditions in November with the majority falling on the 8th as a strong storm system dumped over 2 inches of rain across the region.

AUTUMN 1996 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

| Station Location | Temperatures ($^{\circ}\text{F}$) | | | | | Extreme/Mth–Day | | Precipitation (In) | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------|--------|------------|
| | AvMx | AvMn | AvgT | NmIT | DepNml | MaxT | MinT | Total | Norm | DepNml | Yr to Date |
| National (DCA) | 66.0 | 50.0 | 58.0 | 60.3 | -2.3 | 90/9-8 | 26/11-28 | 15.41 | 9.45 | +5.96 | 45.51 |
| Baltimore (BWI) | 64.6 | 44.4 | 54.5 | 57.3 | -2.8 | 89/9-8 | 18/11-28 | 13.74 | 9.71 | +4.03 | 51.55 |
| Dulles (IAD) | 64.0 | 44.0 | 54.0 | 55.9 | -1.9 | 90/9-8 | 16/11-16 | 15.43 | 9.86 | +5.57 | 52.88 |
| Ft. Belvoir (DAA) | 67.8 | 46.7 | 57.2 | N/A | N/A | 91/9-8 | 21/11-16 [#] | 18.70 | 10.0 | +8.7 | 59.25 |
| Andrews AFB (ADW) | 64.5 | 45.9 | 55.2 | N/A | N/A | 87/9-7 [*] | 21/11-15 [@] | 10.18 | 10.2 | 0 | 41.84 |

Other Occurrences: * September 8th and 10th; # November 28th and 29th; @ November 16th, 28th, and 29th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER: Cold November = Cold Winter?

After a second consecutive unusually cold November, the question arises as to whether this winter will also be colder than normal in the Washington/Baltimore area. Looking back at all Novembers with a temperature departure of -4°F or lower in Washington (41 such years), the following winter was colder than normal about 75% (32 years) of the time. In contrast, there were only 9 years when the Winter was normal (1) or warmer than normal (8). However, remember that these statistics are not to be interpreted as any kind of forecast.

**** COMING SOON: PRESTO on the Internet.....stay tuned. ****