

Sometimes, guts feelings are best: weathercaster

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Channel 2's "Mr. Rogers" came to the Highmeadow Common Campus "neighborhood" Friday with talk of thunder, lightning and tornadoes.

David Rogers is a weekday weather anchor at WJBR-TV. He anchors at 5, 6 and 11 p.m. He joined TV2 in July 1987 as the weekend weather anchor.

"We don't have any windows in our studio," Rogers said. "So I always make it a point, even with computerization, to stick my head out the door and see what it is actually doing out there."

Rogers addressed a school assembly at the invitation of Kathy Duran, a second grade teacher, who teaches an enrichment class on weather. "Cloudy With A Chance of Meatballs," which is also based on the children's book.

In Duran's class, students learn how forecasters predict the weather and why they may sometimes be wrong.

The children become apprentice meteorologists, build the working weather instruments, study Farmington Hills weather and begin to make their own weather predictions. They also learn about acid rain, ozone depletion and weather myths.

ROGERS SAID that this has been a busy year for weather.

"One reason it is tough to forecast snow, especially at this time of year, is that there is still a lot of moisture and the temperature is still warm, not only here on the ground but in the mid-levels of the atmosphere, 1,500 feet. It's tough to pinpoint what's going to fall as rain and changeover to snow."

Rogers said that all TV stations use the same kind of computer analysis. Differences among them when it comes to weather forecasts are based on interpretation. Twenty-four-hour forecasts are 85-90 per-

cent accurate, he said.

"Sometimes you get a certain feeling in your gut and you go by that. Sometimes that works and sometimes you are embarrassed when it doesn't work," he said.

Calls from the public also help because computers are not foolproof, he said. "We rely a lot on people calling in. People, like you, call us up and tell us what is going on in their backyards."

Satellite picture, radar and surface conditions play roles in weather forecasting, he said. Sometimes people ask for the impossible: an accurate forecast weeks in advance, he said.

"A lot of people call in and say, 'Can you tell me what the weather's going to be next month? My daughter's getting married and we want to have an outdoor wedding.'"

ROGERS SHOWED "Terrible Tuesday" a film about a major tornado. The film offered the following tips in preparing for a tornado:

- Have a weather radio on hand at all times.

- Take cover in the basement. If your home doesn't have a basement, stay in the bathroom. The goal is to

put as many walls between you and the tornado as you can.

- Don't try to escape by trying to outride the tornado. That's impossible. Most importantly, don't remain in the auto. Get out and hit the ground.

- Don't light matches or gases inside the house. Gas may be escaping.

ACCORDING TO information supplied by Channel 2, Rogers came to WJBR-TV from WTVH-TV in Richmond, Va., where he was a weekday weather anchor for 1 1/2 years. Before that, he worked as a news anchor at WBBJ-TV in Jackson, Tenn. His professional broadcasting career began in 1979 at WCAU-TV in Philadelphia where he worked as a producer and served on the assignment desk.

In 1988, the United Negro College Fund presented Rogers an award for his outstanding service. In 1986, he received a similar award from the American Cancer Society.

Rogers holds a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Temple University, Philadelphia.

A native of Philadelphia, Rogers lives in Farmington Hills. In his leisure time, he enjoys swimming, reading and collecting artwork.

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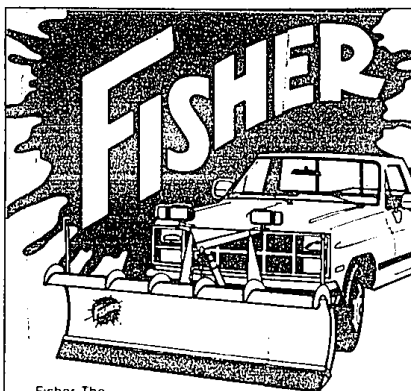
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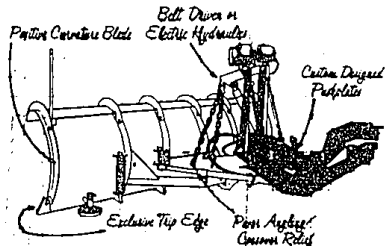
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