

## SUMMER WEATHER LORE

If there are any early risers in your family, get them to watch the clock if it is raining. "Rain before seven, fine by eleven", is the saying that some say. This saying was not always correct, but for the most part, could be trusted. Cold fronts are made more powerful as the day progresses, normally causing the afternoon thunderstorms that can occur in the dead heat of summer. Opposite to a cold front, warm fronts move more slowly, and are a wide band of moisture that moves in over the cold front to replace it. As the warm front and cold front combine, they form condensation, which results in rain. The warm front is such a slow moving system that it can take up to twelve hours before it clears off and if it begins around sunset the day before, by the next morning, the rain should clear up and the sun could be out to brighten your day.

Everyone knows the bright explosions of light that come from the sky, most times are accompanied by a thunderous boom. Well, there is a neat way to discover how far away that thunderstorm is. Speed travels through air, by what is known as the speed of sound. As the temperature rises, it takes longer for the sound to travel through the air because the humidity makes the air dense. The first step to figuring out where the storm is would be to begin counting the seconds after the first strike of lightening. Then, when you hear the first claps of thunder, divide the number of seconds by three. This will tell you how many kilometres away the storm is.



## AUTUMN WEATHER LORE



Every year, people wait to see how harsh a winter is expected. Many people fear this, because if it is predicted to be a long winter, there are many stir crazy days ahead.

Did you know that it is possible to predict how harsh a winter to expect based on the breastbone of your Thanksgiving turkey? When the breastbone of the turkey is exposed, examine the bone. If the bone is quite long, it means that there is a long winter ahead. Next, look closely at the bone to see what colour it is. If it is white, the winter will be mild, but if there are darker parts on the bone, the winter could be more severe.

Have you ever enjoyed flowers that continued to bloom long into the fall? When flowers continue to bloom well into fall, we're in for a snowy winter. On the coasts of some countries, because certain places are surrounded by water, it takes the climate longer to cool down and prepare for winter. When this happens, the people are treated to lovely warm autumn days, however as nice as this warmth is, it messes with nature's natural cycle. When this happens, it just means that a jet stream has not yet shifted and therefore tricks nature into thinking it is spring. If the jet stream does a late shift, it is quite possible that it heads down farther to the south than normal, resulting in a colder winter.



*The flowers in the picture can be found in one of the many gardens on the property of the Fultz House Museum.*

## WEATHER LORE FOR ALL SEASONS



*The weathervane pictured above can be found in the artifact collection of the Colchester Hlstoreum.*

## WHAT IS WEATHER LORE?

Weather lore is often dismissed and used only in a joking matter as old wives tales and myths that hold no truth. In actuality, weather lore is a type of folklore that focuses on the prediction of weather patterns. There are many different types of weather lore. Some can be heard all year round, while others are only for specific seasons.

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## YEAR-ROUND WEATHER LORE



*The two pictures shown above are of swallows flying. The top one is when they are high in the sky and the lower one is a swallow flying close to the ground.*

Year-round weather lore is used all year to predict daily weather. There are many different sayings that people like to say, but most of them revolve around what an animal is doing or how they react to certain aspects of their daily life.

No scientist has been able to find a reason why, but it has become well known that birds have a knack for predicting weather. Take the saying “When swallows fly high, the weather will be dry; when birds fly low, expect rain and a blow” for example. Birds gather close to the ground when a low-pressure system is coming in because it makes the air denser, and therefore difficult to fly in. With the air density high, and strong wind, birds will fly low to the ground to maintain their flight and not run into trouble.

Cats have very sensitive ears that are greatly affected when the air pressure changes. When it is going to rain, the air pressure drops. Cats can detect this drop in temperature with their inner ear. French fisherman would watch the cats aboard their ship closely to try to detect when they should expect rough waters.

## WINTER WEATHER LORE

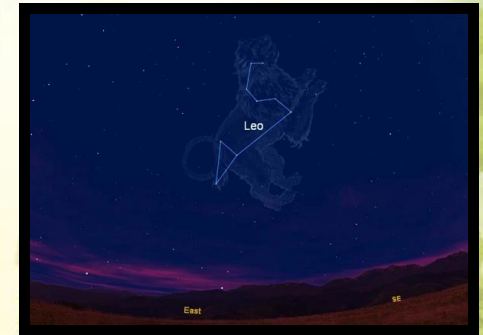
Wood stoves were used to heat the home, but on certain days, there would be very few sparks that erupted from the stove and other day the sparks would be plentiful. It is said, “When sparks fly, a storm is nearby.” If you open up the stove to stoke the fire and sparks fly, it is a sign of incoming rain.

Have you ever enjoyed watching the snowfall? How the large snowflakes look so nice compared to the smaller ones? Well, the size of snowflakes is determined by moisture and wind turbulence. In connective type clouds, large snowflakes are formed because of updrafts that hold the snowflake in the clouds longer. These large flakes are common in snow flurries, and flurries fall and stop quite quickly. This means that there will not be much snow on the ground afterwards. Smaller snowflakes normally fall from more stable types of clouds. If the sky has clouds that are grey and look very uniformed, you will be in for hours of small snow flakes that accumulate quickly. Therefore, when it begins to snow, follow the saying “Little flakes, big snow; big flakes, little snow.”

During the winter months it is difficult to go out for a walk around the neighbourhood. It is cold, icy, and sometimes there is a lot of snow on the ground. However, if you do head out one day in the winter, watch how the smoke exits some of the chimneys and hum along this little rhyme: “When the chimney smoke descends, our nice weather ends.” When a storm is coming, it brings lots of moisture with it. The moisture in the air enters the smoke particles causing them to become heavy. As the smoke gets heavier, it begins to sink downwards due to all the weight in its particles. This is true, because if the weather is dry and warm, the smoke will rise straight up into the sky. So, next time, if you want to know the weather, bundle up and head out for a stroll to see what the smoke is trying to tell you.

## SPRING WEATHER LORE

One of the most recited weather proverbs ever is “In like a lion, out like a lamb”. Unlike most weather lore, this proverb is not based on careful observation. There were no lions on a farm, or out on a lawn to observe, however there was one lion in the sky: Leo the Lion.



*The picture above is of the Leo constellation.*

Astronomers believe that this phrase originated from ancient observations of the stars. In the spring, after the sun has set there are two constellations that can be seen very clearly. One is Leo “the lion” and the other is Aries “the ram” or in some cases “the lamb.” On March 1<sup>st</sup>, if you watch the sky, look for the Leo constellation. If you can see it, the lion is bringing in the month, and therefore the month will end on a calm note weather wise. However, if the sky is cloudy, the lion would end up roaring at the end of the month, causing for stormy weather. Meteorologist Cindy Day investigated this theory over a span of ten years. To her surprise, the proverb was correct six out of the ten years.

Have you ever been walking outside around dusk and heard the frogs croaking away to one another? There’s a saying, “If the frogs are singing, there’s rain coming.” Frogs are known to croak just before it rains, and since they love humidity and most times when it is humid, it has been known to rain, the frogs will sing loudly.