Whither the Weather? 130 Years of Weather Recording at Saint John's

Peggy L. Roske
College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, proske@csbsju.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/archives_history_lessons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/archives_history_lessons/116
Whither the Weather?
130 Years of Weather Recording at Saint John’s

(You all know how I like to mark milestones, right?) In these days of climate change, there is even more reason for everybody to talk about the weather. Here’s a history lesson all about how the weather has been an important feature at Saint John’s for EXACTLY 130 years today (October 12, 2022).
Thanks in large part to the efforts of Abbey Chronicler Fr. Alexius Hoffmann, many events and milestones at Saint John’s early years were carefully documented for us to know today. When I started as archivist, I came across lists of such things in various places for both campuses. Alexius is particularly credited with noting “firsts” - the first automobile at St. John’s, the first electric lights, the first time a book in English was read in the Monastery dining room; and, occasionally, “Lasts,” such as when Prohibition started and the monks “tearfully observed” the last day that beer was served.

http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28051
Scriptorium Dec. 1986 p. 112-113  “Alfred’s Alexius Hoffmann”
Background: https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/cloud-background-summer-spring-1396104335
I wanted to make these historical details more readily available – to anyone interested, and also so that I would have a quick place to find them! – so it didn’t take me long to start my own lists and, with the genius of Miranda Novak, Instructional Technologist Extraordinaire, we set up a Timeline of CSBSJU history that is available from both Archives’ websites. You can choose to view listings for one or both campuses, and choose some specific topical limitations ... http://apps.csbsju.edu/csbarchives/timeline.aspx
…to get to a list of events, and they generally link to more details and references. As mentioned, the event we are noting, 130 years ago today, is in the “SJU / Buildings and Grounds” category, and took place in 1892 - when the Collegeville Weather Station was established at Saint John’s. [For those of you in Communications and Marketing, sorry, but I haven’t converted all the “St.” designations to “Saint” yet!]
In accord with the practice in many European monasteries at that time of recording weather observations, Fr. Peter [Engel]... opened a meteorological station. ...The formal opening was made with the appropriate ceremonies on the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America [sic], October 12, 1892."

This event is documented – and re documentos – in several sources, including, of course, *Worship & Work* – with author Father Colman Barry getting his facts from two previous publications, which are in turn using Alexius Hoffmann’s chronologies. Those two articles are both in the Abbey’s old *Scriptorium* publication. One article, shown here, is by then-novice Fr. Gunther Rolfson from 1944 and titled “Our Scientific Endeavor.” It says that, “in accord with the practice in many European monasteries at that time of recording weather observations, Fr. Peter [Engel]... opened a meteorological station. ...The formal opening was made with the appropriate ceremonies on the 400th anniversary of the [so-called] discovery of America, October 12, 1892.”

1944 December *Scriitorium* v.5 n.1 p. 35
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/2098/rec/2
Fortunately, all the records made at St. John’s - from Fr. Peter’s first observation at 8:30 on the morning of October 12, 1892--are still preserved, and they will doubtless be of future value in making studies and surveys of weather and climate…” (p.42)

The second article was published the very next year, in 1945. “Our Weather and Climate” goes into greater detail about the weather station’s history up to that point, and specifies the equipment it featured: thermometers, barometer, anemometer, rain gauge, etc. It also names all the monks who recorded the measurements over the years, and tells about significant weather events up to that point. A quote of encouragement to any archivist – or anyone mindful of the Benedictine value of stability – is that “...all the records made at St. John’s - from Fr. Peter’s first observation at 8:30 on the morning of October 12, 1892--are still preserved...” O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Publications\Scriptorium\1945 Summer “Our Weather & Climate,” Scriptorium v.5n.2 p.40-49 https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25151/rec/15?_ga=2.136474616.994985372.1665345486-244096981.1664283063
And I found this very interesting, too: a passage about how the weather was shared. In 1894, a weather forecast was sent from Minneapolis on a daily post card. Once the ability to send telegraphs was established at Saint John’s in 1896, the forecast was wired each day from Chicago - arriving about 12 hours before the weather itself. It would be printed on post cards at St. John's and sent on the morning train to some 40 post offices west of Collegeville, where the appropriate signal flags would be displayed for the local people to see. The Weather Bureau was then part of the U.S. Signal Service.
And both of the *Scriptorium* articles record where Peter Engel located that very first weather station: it was in the turret built in 1891 on the roof of the main building, overlooking the statue of the Abbey’s patron, Saint John the Baptist.

1945 Summer “Our Weather & Climate,” *Scriptorium* v.5n.2 p.40-49
You can barely make out the turret in this 1912 photo, let alone the statue of St. John the Baptist, but the statue was there until 1960.
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/6644
Here’s another photo, a sharper one, and you can zoom in on the statue in front of the turret.
Quad photo:
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Quad\LP069.CampusView.jpg
This 1890s sketch shows the statue a little more clearly. The statue was removed when the Breuer wing was added to the Monastery. As this 2022 photo shows, the little platform on which the statue stood is still in place. The statue has graced the Monastery garden in more recent years. By the time this 2019 photo was taken, John’s cross had been reduced to a walking stick. I’ve been told that his re-attached arm was recently repaired more seamlessly.

Quad photo: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Quad\LP069.CampusView.jpg
Sketch: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Quad1890s era sketch of east facade looking NW.pdf
Statue photos from O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\CAMPUS SITES\Statues and Shrines\John the Baptist Monastery Garden
A later *Scriptorium* article noted that the turret location was a big advantage to the monks who took the weather measurements; all they had to do was climb some stairs in the same building where they lived, learned, worked, ate, and slept.

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/6644
Text inset: 1952 Scriptorium v.12 n.1 January 1952 p. 50
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25978/rec/23
Here’s an old photo showing the turret from the west, and another showing more of the roof, and in which you can see the Observatory, built in 1894, in the distance.
Images from SJAA
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s
Observatory [1894-1961]
Here’s one from 1909, and you can see the little catwalk to the entryway on the left... “Weathermonk” was not a good job if you were afraid of heights!

Images from SJAA
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s
Left image from “In & Around SJU 1909 p. 12
That first *Scriptorium* article also identifies that turret – though it is referred to as a “tower” – as the location of the first weather station. And it touches on something that has given flavor to many a Halloween tale on campus over the years when it refers to its location as being atop the “Mad Monk’s” tower.

1944 December *Scriptorium* v.5 n.1 p. 35
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/2098/rec/2
Over a century later, a blue light in that tower gets attention, including being featured in *The Record* a couple of times. Former archivist Br. David Klingeman explained then that the blue light, rather than indicating the presence of a ghost or a “Mad Monk,” was simply an ultraviolet light to trap bugs.

2007-03-22, The Record p. 1 & 6
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33014/rec/31
2003-01-30, The Record p.4
Photo courtesy of Eric Hollas OSB;
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Quad\Quad\E Quad turret....jpg
But back to the weather station: among the important events recorded when it was in the turret or tower was the tornado of 1894, which struck around 8:30 pm on June 27, about an hour and a half after Peter Engel had predicted in his weather report a “terrific thunderstorm tonight.” I’ll leave the details for another lesson, aside from noting that the top of St. John’s south Quad building wing was damaged, but though the weathervane was blown away and the turret moved one foot north, the instruments inside the turret were untouched, and the anemometer, which landed on one of the Great Hall spires, only had a small piece of glass broken.

From a report about the damage done by the 1894 tornado, in *Scriptorium* p.33 v.13 n.2 December 1953

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/3575/rec/8
Meteorological reports such as this overview of the weather of 1896 appeared occasionally in *The Record*. The tower was not an ideal location for the weather station, high above the ground, and above a roof that would be hot in the summers – allowances for which were made in the records.

1897-01-01, The Record p. 22-23

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/9651/rec/2
A 1953 article* on the weather station gives lots of reasons why the Quad turret was not a suitable location for taking meteorological measurements. So when a new science hall was built in 1910, it was a logical choice to relocate the weather station there, and a new spot, specifically for the station, was designed atop what later became known as Engel Hall, and which today we call Simons Hall – even though some of the same problems existed with its weather measurements being taken on the 4th floor, near a roof.

Simons (originally Engel) Hall, built in 1910
Photo: https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5804
* 1952 Scriptorium v.12 n.1 January 1952 p. 48
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25976/rec/23
In July 1913 the weather station and its equipment were moved from the Quad’s turret to the fourth floor of the new Science Hall. Those who kept the records now had to go out in the weather to another building to take the weather measurements. And climb a LOT of stairs to get there every day.

Simons (originally Engel) Hall, built in 1910

Photo: https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5804

Text: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Publications\Scriptorium\1945 Summer “Our Weather & Climate,” *Scriptorium* v.5n.2 p.41

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25152/rec/15
Worship & Work records that engineering classes were in the basement, biology and physics on the first floor, chemistry on the second, art and drawing on the third, and the weather station “was placed on the very top of the building and remained there until 1942.”

Simons (originally Engel) Hall

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5805

Text from Worship and Work - SJU Archives - Vivarium (csbsju.edu) p. 228

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/11162
In those days, even after the move, they were still using flags to signal the weather forecast: “The flag signals, displayed from the tower of the Science Hall...are of great value to the farmers of the vicinity...” noted The Record in 1924.

1924-01-01, The Record p. 29-30
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/23720/rec/6
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/23721/rec/6
The aforementioned weather records do indeed still exist in the Archives, in such things as these bound volumes...

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Committees\Admin Assembly Presentations\2016\01 Jan - Snow\Weather logbooks
Stack22Shelf7Box1\IMG_1467.jpg
...recording weather phenomena, page by page, day by day, and year by year.

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Committees\Admin Assembly Presentations\2016\01 Jan - Snow\Weather logbooks
Stack22Shelf7Box1\IMG_1463.jpg
1940

...such as this page I showed in my history lesson about “Snowstorms at Saint John’s” - one of which was the 1940 Armistice Day blizzard.

O:\ Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Committees\Admin Assembly Presentations\2016\01 Jan - Snow\Weather logbooks Stack22Shelf7Box1\IMG_1459.jpg. Weather logbook in the SJU Archives [22/7 Box 1]
Although I’m jumping ahead a bit, time-wise, here’s what the weather reports look like nowadays.

[Note: When initially presented to the SJU/OSB Administrative Assembly on October 12, 2022, this is where I stopped. The rest of the presentation was given at the December 7, 2022 Assembly.]
Details are sparse, but the 1945 *Scriptorium* article mentioned earlier observed that, “for a number of reasons, it came about that in July 1941 the weather station was closed,” and also that, a year later, they decided to build a new weather station in “more suitable quarters.” That would be, presumably, someplace where a high elevation, a hot roof, different wind gusts, etc. would not impact the measurements.
Text: 1945 Summer “Our Weather & Climate,” *Scriptorium* v.5n.2 p.41
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25152/rec/15
The new space was this attractive little stone building, a mystery the first time I came across a photo of it. A footnote explains how they accounted for the 1941-42 closure’s gap in the weather records. They inserted, “with proper notations,” the measurements from the St. Cloud weather station.

Text: 1945 Summer “Our Weather & Climate,” Scriptorium v.5n.2 p.41
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25152/rec/15
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s\Image on left: Meteorological Station (stone) 1943 Yrbk p71.jpg
Here’s a photo to put the building in context. You can see the weather station on the right edge, with Benet and the Great Hall spires and the Auditorium in the distance to the south, and handball courts, where Mary Hall is now, in the foreground.

Right: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s\Mary Hall Album, shelf 102\Weather Station (1) cropped.jpg
This October 1942 *Record* article gives some explanations for the move: the roof location was “inefficient for accurate records.” And it also explains that the gap was due, in part, to the slow delivery of some new instruments.

1942-10-29, The Record p.4

A November 1942 *Record* article says that the “new equipment...will not be obtainable until after the war.”

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s\Image from SJAA: WeatherStation1942
Text: 1942-11-19, The Record p. 2
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/29418/rec/14
But the new weather station eventually was up and running, and even gets mentioned among the descriptions of SJU buildings in the 1944-45 *Catalog*. (p. 13)

Image from SJAA: WeatherStation1942
Text: 1942-11-19, The Record p. 2
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/29418/rec/14
Catalog text: https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/13914/rec/3
But yet another move is necessitated when it is decided to build a new dorm – Mary Hall – so close to the weather station that it will have to move yet again.
It hangs on for a while, but it’s got to go...and there were even discussions about discontinuing the weather station altogether.
A handy article in *Scriptorium* reviewed the station’s previous locations, some of the decision-making that went into them, and how it was resolved to continue the tradition. And it provided this sketch of the new station.

1952 Scriptorium v.12 n.1 January 1952 p. 48
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25976/rec/23
“It was thought that the records of the past ought not to be discontinued without good reason. And so, in early July, it was decided that the apple cellar south of the powerhouse should be the new site.”

1952 Scriptorium v.12 n.1 January 1952 p. 51 (image, p. 48)
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25979/rec/23
The new weather station building was a 7-foot cube, with the 7-foot tower of the old station remounted on top, and a staircase to it from the west.

1952 Scriptorium v.12 n.1 January 1952 p. 51 (image, p. 48)
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25979/rec/23
Photo: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s
Here’s a later photo, perhaps from 1957, when the new Lit Press building was being erected just north of the apple cellar and weather station.

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s
...and another, showing it from the northwest side, with its stairs, tower and weathervane; the Lit Press in the foreground; and the Seminary (Emmaus Hall) just barely visible in the distance.
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s
In 1951 the new weather station was ceremoniously welcomed with chant, holy water, and the Abbot’s blessing. This Record article – published exactly 71 years ago today from when I showed you Part 1 last month – also hinted at a bit of levity, referencing “disgruntled landscapists” who tried to “perforate the door” with a half-moon, thinking it would be an “appropriate decoration” (for a building that resembled an outhouse!).

1951-10-12, The Record p.4
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30500/rec/22
This 1962 *Record* article celebrated the 70 years of weather observations made to that point...and showed what it is like to actually make them! “70 years of the antics of the weather here in God’s Country have been faithfully set down in graphs, charts and tables.”

1962-03-23, The Record p.2
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33440/rec/26
Here’s a photo I took in 2007. That same year, the weather station was mentioned in the Catalog as a selling point for Biology majors. It stays in the catalog through the 2020-2021 edition (and the mention changes to “a full-featured weather station”). More on that later.

(It is not in subsequent editions from 2021-22.)

Image: O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-1950s\North Root Cellar and Lit Press plr 2007.jpg
In 2008 the National Weather Service “belatedly presented a certificate in recognition of 100 years of observations” to then-“Weathermonk” Brother Bradley, a citation that was 16 years overdue.

Also http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/24441

2008 Volume 08 Issue 03 Abbey Banner Winter p.30
...and a spring 2009 *Sagatagan Seasons* went into greater details about just what the work involved. ... If you look carefully, you’ll notice that Br. Brad isn’t up on a ladder, or even on top of the apple cellar. At some point, the weather station had been moved down to the Emmaus Hall parking lot.

Spring 2009 *Sagatagan Seasons*, v. 12 n. 2 p.3

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5459/rec/15
"Last month I ended an eight-year stint as a cooperative weather observer for the National Weather Service.

Br. Neal Laloo, with assistance from Br. John Brudney and Br. Andrew Frederick, has succeeded me.”

I got an email from then-Brother (now Father) Brad in August 2010 letting me know that he would be ending his term as the Saint John’s weather observer. His successor, Brother Neal Laloo, eventually started emailing me the monthly weather reports to archive digitally.

Spring 2009 Sagatagan Seasons, v. 12 n. 2 p.3
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5459/rec/15
As of 2012, the weather “station” involves a few separate locations in the Abbey grounds and buildings. On the lawn in back of the Monastery’s Breuer building are two spots, one for measuring temperatures and one for measuring snowfall.

*Abbey Banner* Fall 2012, p. 27

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/24980/rec/36

Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
In the winter, this little platform is swept clean each day so as to record the depth of any new-fallen snow.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
A metal vessel to collect precipitation is nearby, mounted to the side of the retaining wall from the Breuer building’s basement parking area. Whatever precipitation falls into it is measured.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
The Abbey’s weather recording operation is in the Breuer Monastery Building’s basement. In winter, they swap out the metal vessel’s insert with an empty one and bring the first one inside so its contents can melt and be measured. The insert is the clear cylinder in the bucket on the right. Note the boots – and the snowshoes! – if needed for the trip outside.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
This stick is used for measuring precipitation. Gathering the water into the smaller cylinder allows for a precision in the hundredths of an inch.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
This yard stick is used to record snow. Note that inches are divided into tenths, rather than eighths or sixteenths.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
The *Nimbus* unit, in a locked box to prevent tampering, receives readings from the outside thermometer.
Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
Here’s the outside thermometer where the monks get each day’s high and low temperatures. It’s inside this “hive” mounted on a pole – with a wired connection to the *Nimbus* unit back inside the building.

Photos courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
I have to thank Br. Eric Pohlman, an occasional “weathermonk” sub – and an Archives volunteer! – for providing this batch of photos and details.
Photo courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.
The installation of the new equipment was noted in the Fall 2012 Abbey Banner, in which Br. Robin noted that the biggest challenge was to keep monks, mistaking it for a bird feeder, from filling it with sunflower seeds!

Photo courtesy of Eric Pohlman, OSB, December 2022.

*Abbey Banner* Fall 2012, p. 27

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/24980/rec/36
But to back up, there’s more to complete the story; the Abbey’s may be the oldest weather station by far, but it isn’t the only one on campus. Back in 2005, a movement was afoot to create a different weather station at Saint John’s. Biology professor Steve Saupe documented a bit of the 2005 station’s history in this, his 2010 grant application to replace it. He said that, in 2005, funding was provided to install a weather station “to provide meteorological data to complement studies of airborne pollen and molds” by him and his students.

From Steve Saupe: weather station grant fall 2010.doc
Image: O:\Institutional Advancement SJU\Advancement Photo Archive\Advancement Photo Archive_Main Folder\Publications_Photos\Campaign Case Statement (2005)\CASE Photos\Add.Saupe.field.TIF
The SJU station was installed — where else?! — on the roof of Engel Hall! - but not the old Engel Hall.

From Steve Saupe: weather station grant fall 2010.doc

Image: Simons (originally Engel) Hall

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5805
It went on the roof of the 1965 Breuer science hall, which had been renamed the Peter Engel Science Center in 2000.

From Steve Saupe: weather station grant fall 2010.doc
Image: Simons (originally Engel) Hall
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5805
This Saint John’s University (not Saint John’s Abbey) weather station would have been the one mentioned in the 2007 Catalog as a selling point for Biology majors [see slide 44]. This weather station’s data was reported directly to a website which IT’s Paul Beniek created and maintained. However, the set-up required a pc and a server, kept in Steve Saupe’s Pengel Hall office, and it often “crashed.” (Paul has referred to it as a “problem child.”) (in a phone call with the Archivist 12/6/2022).

From Steve Saupe: weather station grant fall 2010.doc
2019 Fall St. John’s Magazine p. 5,
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28600/rec/17
The funding for the upgrade eventually came through in 2012, and this Record article highlights the new station...

Sept. 7, 2012 p. 2
https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/41958/rec/32
...as did this CMS [Communications and Marketing] feature about it in June 2012...

*The Record* Sept. 7, 2012 p. 2

https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/41958/rec/32

https://www.csbsju.edu/news/weather-station-online
...providing one of the few photos in the Archives of Paul.
https://www.csbsju.edu/news/weather-station-online
As we all know, technology requires continuous upgrades; in 2021, Steve and Paul yet again requested, and received, funding for a third SJU weather station. This time, others – from Physics, Environmental Studies, and the Arboretum – chimed in to support the request for their own purposes.

https://www.csbsju.edu/news/weather-station-online
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Weather Station 1942-SJU Weather Station documents 2010-SJU_Weather_Station_Proposal_2021.pdf
So we’re now part of the “Weather Underground” network, and we have a wealth of weather data at our fingertips – weather measurements that are logged every five minutes, on a station that is solar-powered...

https://weatherstation.csbsju.edu/

Personal Weather Station Dashboard | Weather Underground (wunderground.com)

https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KMNSTJOS11
...running 24/7, and available to anyone, anywhere. Enough to make any weather aficionado happy!
https://weatherstation.csbsju.edu/
I encourage you to consider Steve and Paul’s proposal for a new weather station in Collegeville. Although I have tried to give you specific reasons why a station is important from a user perspective, the key reason why you should consider this project is because we live in Minnesota – we are obsessed with weather, we talk endlessly about weather, weather guides our activities in our daily lives, weather is the one unifying factor in our society regardless of religious inclination or lack thereof, political choice, socioeconomic status, or recreational preference. Please consider this proposal, let there be weather information!

Dr. Manny Campos – an outdoor runner year-round – expressed the need for the station this way: You should consider this project because WE LIVE IN MINNESOTA, where we are obsessed with the weather, it dictates our activities, and is the one unifying factor in our society regardless of religion, politics, socioeconomic status, or recreational preference. “Let there be weather information!”

Ending of a Jan. 31, 2021 letter by Dr. Manuel Campos to the FDRC (Faculty Development and Research Committee) in support of Steve and Paul’s proposal to replace the malfunctioning SJU weather station.
A picture is worth a thousand words, so I’m going share one final bit of information, for anyone who doesn’t know it already: you can view the Abbey Church bell banner web cam – and thus the weather – on the internet any time of day or night, too. Finding out the temperature and other measurements is great, but as someone who works all day in a windowless basement, the webcam is where I go to find out if I need an umbrella, or sunglasses, or if I’m going to have to bike home in the dark because I’ve become too engrossed in my work!
(Or, this year, you can also tune in the webcam showing construction of the new Abbey Woodworking and Organ Building!)
https://app.truelook.cloud/?code=e4ywkoagc9ep1rbjcn0g6fui
Originally presented to the SJU/OSB Administrative Assembly in two parts, on October 12 and December 7, 2022.