Transcript of "Steven Glazier, Lead Meteorologist at WeatherNation in Denver, Colorado"

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond

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Kelly Savoie:

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, **Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond**. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Rex Herbst-Horner, and we'll be your hosts. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Rex Horner:

We're happy to introduce today's guest, **Steven Glazier**, Lead Meteorologist at WeatherNation in Denver, Colorado. Welcome, Steven. Thanks very much for joining us today.

Steven Glazier:

You're welcome, Rex. Hi, Kelly. Good to see you all.

Kelly:

Steven, could you tell us a little bit about what sparked your interest in meteorology and how it influenced your educational path?

Steven:

Sure, and I'm really curious if anybody else has the same story. I haven't run across someone still with the same story that I have. So what originally sparked my interest in weather was drag racing, literally a one quarter of a mile race strip in New Hampshire at a raceway called New England Dragway. And it's a bit of an odd story because you wouldn't think that a drag strip would do that. But the reason why is because my father had taken our family car and then transformed it into a race car.

Kelly:

How cool.

Steven:

At six or seven years old, I thought it was the coolest thing, yeah. Especially because I was playing with these kind of toy cars at six or seven. So then every weekend we would go up to the racetrack and he got fairly into it to an extent where he bought a weather station that had various readings, temperature, dew point. He bought a little barometer and this calculator that would input all those variables like temperature and pressure and so forth, and that it would help him calibrate his car, his race car, because these minor differences in the weather would affect his race car.

Steven:

So after doing it weekend after weekend, I got hooked on watching the weather for him. So I not only had to take the observations for the temperature, the relative humidity pressure, so forth. I know if it was rising or falling, but I also had to watch the sky cover, the wind direction and anything else that would affect his car outside of those other variables. So after doing that summer after summer, I got hooked on it. And then my parents had, let me know that a friend of theirs told them that you could major in meteorology. So I said, "Wow, I didn't even know you could major in it." So then that's what fallen after that. I decided to keep pursuing it after the childhood dream in that regard.

Rex:

So a family hobby became a scientific interest in the weather itself?

Steven:

It did, it did. Because it was interesting how much his particular car was influenced by the weather. And for instance, if it was a crisp autumn day with high pressure, a cool temperature, a nice low dew point, his car would just run clean, run fast. And especially with the tailwind, some wind behind him. Whereas in the summer heat, humidity, mid-afternoon, mugginess, maybe recent rain, the car would run a lot slower. So it was kind of interesting. And by slower, faster, I mean only a 10th or two tenths of a second, but it made a big difference in terms of the way he was competing regarding the racing.

Kelly:

Does it affect the tire pressure too when it changes from cold temperature to warm temperature or vice versa?

Steven:

Yeah, it does. And he had to kind of make sure that he had to let some pressure out, especially really hot days. Let a little bit more out because then there's a lot of torque and a lot of pressure right off the start because you're going from zero to, he eventually would make it up to about 140 miles an hour in about nine or 10 seconds.

Kelly:

Wow.

Steven:

So it was pretty quick, and that kind of torque needed to have a certain consistent tire pressure, which was constantly changing.

Kelly:

So when you found out that you could major in meteorology, did you research a bunch of schools? Did you have any one in particular in mind? How did you end up where you decided to go?

Steven:

So not even having known that you could major in meteorology, I didn't really have much of a clue who offered it. The person that let my parents know you could major in it, let us know about Lyndon State College up in Vermont. So I said, "Okay." So we toured there. And then I said, "Well, I grew up in

Connecticut at the time." And I said, "Well, is there something in Connecticut?" And Western Connecticut University, one of the other, they had a smaller program, not to the extent of Lyndon's. And then I just kind of did a search of popular schools, and the University of Oklahoma, of course came up. So those three I had sent a resume and application, my high school transcript over to do it, to those universities and state colleges and so forth. So those are the only three that I had pegged coming out of high school.

Kelly:

And so where did you end up going?

Steven:

So I went to Lyndon State. I went to up to Lyndonville, Vermont, known as the Vermont Northeast Kingdom. And that was from 2004 to 2008. And it was a great four years. It was pretty close to home. It was still about three, three and a half hours away from where I grew up in Connecticut. So it's just far enough away, but just close enough to come home perhaps once a month or every other weekend.

Kelly:

And I know that school has a broadcast meteorology program. Was that what you were interested in going in, or were you more open to just meteorology in general? Or did you pick that school because you knew it had a broadcast meteorology program?

Steven:

I did. I picked it because it had a good broadcast meteorology program. Both weather and broadcasting were both strong. And I was interested in broadcast meteorology because on the side during high school, and even late middle school through high school I would volunteer at a small cable company called Cox Communications. It was a small public access channel in Enfield, Connecticut, and it was just volunteering once or twice a week on cooking shows. My dad had a show on there, or it might be a talk show of sorts. So I'd volunteer there and I got hooked in the TV side of things. So that helped me decide what sector of meteorology to go into.

Rex:

That leads right into the next question I was going to ask you about what opportunities you pursued inside and outside of school, either high school or college that you knew would be, or might be beneficial to securing your first and your subsequent jobs in meteorology? So the public-access TV station sounds like a very interesting way to understand what the television industry was like pretty early on. What other opportunities did you have, or did you find out about that helped you feel a little bit more knowledgeable in the context around what you wanted to do coming out of college?

Steven:

In addition to the volunteering at Cox Communications for that public access channel, I also job shadowed Bruce DePrest. He was the chief meteorologist at WFSB in Connecticut. They're just outside of Hartford, Connecticut, technically, but it's the Hartford TV market. So that wasn't an internship, nothing paid or anything. I just emailed or called the TV station and asked for Bruce and said, "Can I come by and just shadow you for a while? Maybe a day a week, two days a week for maybe a month or so, just to see what you do?" So that was insightful. And he opened up his door, he was great. That was fantastic, volunteering at the public-access channel did it. And then also, it's funny, I still have the tapes,

I think. They're in the drawer over there. I literally recorded some VHS tapes of me spitting out these weather stats on a mountain called Soapstone Mountain. It's in Northeast Connecticut.

Steven:

Not really a mountain from where I live now in Denver standards. This thing is maybe 800 feet elevation, that Soapstone Mountain. But my dad said, "You got to stick out. You have to have a shtick, something that makes you unique for weather." So I did some science things up there. And then I, for some reason I thought that would help me to get into Lyndon State College. And I sent that, I think I sent that alongside my other necessary documents to try to get into college. And I got in, I have no idea if that tape was ever seen, but I have copies of it still here at home.

Kelly:

So, once you graduated, what was your first job in the field? And then, how did you end up at WeatherNation?

Steven:

That was a bit of a road course. My first job outside of college was at a small TV station and it was a submarket station of the Harrisonburg, Virginia market. So there was Harrisonburg, which is known for James Madison University, JMU. It's in the Shenandoah Valley. It's Southwest of D.C. and northwest of Richmond. And there was a small TV station as a part of it of WHSV in Winchester, Virginia, which is the northern tip of Virginia. And that was my first job in July 2008 to 2010. I was there for two years. And the funny thing is, and for anybody that is thinking still about doing this career, you need a lot of patience. I was a reporter for four days a week, and then I ended up being a meteorologist just one show. It was a Sunday night, 11:00 PM broadcast, I believe it was, for one, two, three weather hits during the show, that's about it. And then the other 95% of my time was doing reporting. General assignment reporting for that TV station.

Kelly:

Huh, so I guess, one day is better than none, and you were able to get that, at least?

Steven:

I did.

Kelly:

Yeah, and so then did that, I'm sure that helped you with your next position, where did you move on to next?

Steven:

It did. I continued two years in Virginia as a meteorologist and reporter, and then I had the same job offer in Burlington, Vermont at WFFF/VNY, it's a Fox and ABC affiliate in Burlington, Vermont. And I had the same thing, a meteorologist and reporter, which I did for about a year and a half. So the time in Virginia reporting certainly helped me, because I included a lot of those segments and reports on my resume tape. I sure had weather first, but I also had some reporting since I was still applying for it. And I was glad that I had that because it only allowed two months to pass from graduation from college to my

first job. So I think that helped, looking back in hindsight, to make myself a little bit more valuable. And I heard that from other alumni too, to have multiple skillsets.

Kelly:

So then tell us a little bit about how you ended up at WeatherNation?

Steven:

There was one more pit stop there. After four and a half years, four, four and a half years in Burlington, Vermont, I stopped by West Palm Beach, Florida. It was a CBS affiliate in Southeast Florida, West Palm is north of Miami and Southeast of Orlando. So that was a two year stop. And that was really nice because of the weather and the beaches, but also because of the tropical meteorology. I had grown up in New England and we have experienced some tropical storms and most notably, I remember Hurricane Bob in the early '90s, but not really outside of that many tropical situations. So living in West Palm Beach, Florida, I was constantly watching the tropics. Florida sits out like a sore thumb from the Gulf in the Atlantic. And that really honed my love of tropical meteorology, I can't get enough of that. So those two years there, that was mainly meteorology by that point, I hadn't done much reporting. I would go out to do a tornado survey, not do the survey, but follow along with the NWS meteorologist. And then in January of 2017 I moved to Denver to work at WeatherNation as a meteorologist, and that's still where I am today.

Rex:

Can you give a brief introduction to what WeatherNation is and does for someone that doesn't know?

Steven:

Let me think of how many words this is. Five words or so. The motto of WeatherNation is “Weather”—then there's a period—“It's what we do.” So that's the shortest summary we can do. But elaborating beyond just a handful of words, it's a 24/7 weather network that covers national weather, top stories, sometimes anything happening that's really drastically happening internationally, but primarily 24/7, 365 weather network. Mainly streaming, especially with today's turnover to streaming services. So it's mainly streaming and covering any kind of top weather story, but also providing regional forecasts with closer views and detail on day-to-day weather and top weather stories going on in various parts of the country.

Rex:

How do people watch WeatherNation forecasts? Is there a proprietary platform like Netflix for weather or something similar where folks can tune in to their region? Or does WeatherNation also license or distribute their content through other communication channels?

Steven:

A little bit through other communication channels. For instance, main drivers, I would think that are most popular, most common to people that they know about. Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Samsung TV. You can also get it on your Xbox and PlayStation for any gamers. Then there's Pluto TV, another service. There are so many.

Rex:

Sure.

Steven:

So Pluto TV is one of the newer and kind of a little bit more well-known free TV services. Dish Network as well. And there are a handful of television affiliates around the country. For instance, I was an affiliate in West Palm Beach, Florida was an affiliate TV station where for instance, if you have multiple channels, I have a satellite in my living room. And it's, I should say they're like the TV rabbit ears, but nowadays it's about the size of a computer screen or a piece of paper. It hangs on your wall and that's your antenna for free HDTV. It's great, I love it. And some channels have a .1, .2, .3 channel. And that's what we are, perhaps a .2 or .3 channel and a couple of stations around the country.

Rex:

So when you started out in 2008, was this model of weather communication being talked about? I know that smart TV technology was either very nascent or even non-existent or non-familiar to a lot of folks at that time.

Steven:

Now, it was way different in my opinion. It was, I mean, I just didn't think of how many more people had a cable subscription. They had a standard, whether it be at least, I mean, Comcast comes to mind, whatever it may have been back in the day. But so many people had a cable subscription and I would send out a standard resume tape or a DVD and just so much less streaming. I mean, even before YouTube was so popular, now YouTube TV is there. So I would still send out my tape. And now I just send, if I were to update anything resume-wise, would just be a link on Vimeo or YouTube, and that's about it and send you there. But in terms of the communication, it has changed drastically. And WeatherNation, even before I got there, which I don't know much before I got there, but I know that they were seeing that happening. They jumped right on it, especially Roku and the streaming platforms that way. And it definitely helped because seems to be the trend that continues.

Kelly:

For our listeners who may be interested in working at WeatherNation, what is it like to be a lead meteorologist there? What do you do?

Steven:

So I'll take you through the day. We work 10-hour shifts and we work four days a week. So it's four 10s and then three days off. So the work-life balance is awesome, to stay the least, especially with that one extra day off. So getting in, it varies what time. We have, at least on a on-camera meteorologist, there are four main shifts. There's a 2:00 AM. There's a 7:00 AM. There's a 10:00 AM and there's a 11:30 AM. And those are the start times to go then 10 hours after that. But primarily what you're doing when you're getting in is chatting with the prior meteorologists that are there. Any big top stories, anything that's happened throughout the past half day or day regarding a tornado report or something substantial, a new record, or the way the models are trending on a nor'easter.

Steven:

So talking to them about what's going on and then also formulating what we call sequences. So those are what you would see if you watched our program, WeatherNation, that would just be a show. And randomly you just turned it on. We could be in the middle of one of these sequences, and we usually have about five to eight sequences, and those are top weather stories happening nationally. And then we can go into some greater detail of what's happening regionally. And that could be a fire update in the west. That could be a hurricane, a clipper coming across the Great Lakes, a heat wave in the south, those kind of things.

Steven:

And then you get right into building mode. We build all our own graphics, now not from scratch because they're already there. So you're just making little tweaks here and there, pushing graphics into a new camera view to follow a weather system and adding a few more cities to show those. And then we go on air. Most of our meteorologists on air are on for about four or five hours of the shift, about half the shift. Not constantly, because there are commercial breaks, but about four or five hours are spent in studio delivering the weather in a standard TV studio, cameras, lights action.

Steven:

And then there's responsibilities behind the scenes, such as updating the website stories of those same sequences, updating the social media, maybe searching for content, especially if it's on a busier weather day. And putting that all together, those 10 hours actually go by pretty quickly.

Rex:

So how big is WeatherNation in terms of employees?

Steven:

It's a small company. It's a nice family company too. So perhaps about 50 people. It's relatively small and I love it because then you can bounce ideas off of some folks that might be running some things, whether it be the advertising or the owner of the company. You see them walking around, it's not as though, I'd worked for Sinclair and Nexstar television, and you'd hardly see those people walking around your news station. At least you get a memo a month out that they're going to be showing up at your campus. So it's really nice. It's a small tight-knit group, and real good people too.

Kelly:

So were the shifts the same all the time? A 2 AM shift, that would be, that'd be tough. But I'm assuming that it's not rotating or anything? Your shift is your shift. Is that how it works?

Steven:

It is yeah, primarily. Unlike the National Weather Service offices still have some rotations where they'll switch every few weeks. We stay the same, unless something drastic happens or unless severe weather coverage interrupts that. We've had hurricane seasons in the past where you're just working some wacky hours and perhaps some long stretches to cover an event. But outside of that, it's pretty stable. So the work-life balance then doing four, 10-hour shifts ends up being pretty nice. Having that third weekend day, it's just essential for relaxing and then getting re-energized and then motivated to get back in the office the following week.

Kelly:

Yeah, that doesn't sound like a bad work week compared to regular broadcast meteorologists where it's a little tougher sometimes. What do you like the most about your job at WeatherNation?

Steven:

I like the fact that we can talk as much as we want about the weather. So there's no really, our segments are seven minutes long. So outside of going over seven minutes, there aren't really many boundaries to it. I had worked in local news. I told you about my work history, which had taken me from 2008 to 2017, so about nine years or so in local news. And that was nice, and that was good, but you hear a mixture of news and weather, and weather's just a small segment. And you kind of have to wade through some news stories that might not be the most positive. So with weather, it's just all weather, it's all weather stories. And surely there are some non-positive weather stories when it comes to disasters, but you get to explain things in terms of having more time to do it.

Steven:

And local TV, I only had maybe three, three and a half minutes to discuss the weather and a lot of things to get to, especially the seven day forecast, making sure that was up for a fair amount of time. But here we get to explain why it's so snowy in the Great Lakes or why that fire is spreading so fast. So I'm constantly learning. It's a place that I get to learn and learn from other people too, because we have meteorologists that have joined us from various parts of the country, whether it be Connecticut like me, Michigan, Louisiana, California. So it's great to hear from those people about their knowledge of weather. So it's constantly like a train of learning, continuing, which I love.

Rex:

And you've sort of touched on the family, let's say weather geek environment of WeatherNation. I mean that in the most positive way, versus a little bit more of the corporate culture at your Sinclair broadcasting station or some of those other television stations. And my understanding is that sometimes there's decisions about how to present the weather at a television station that are based on preferences of management, corporate priorities in terms of viewership or other success metrics. And whether, let's say it's talk about climate change and not being able to speak in the way you want about some of those topics, or to get in-depth with just educating the public about science in a fun, engaging way. And it sounds like those boundaries don't exist at WeatherNation. And in fact, there's a culture of encouraging all the meteorologists to find ways to engage viewers with the science.

Steven:

Yeah, you're right, Rex, and climate change is still pretty sensitive to some people and gets opinions going. And sometimes it ranks among those things that you don't ask people about, their political affiliation or religious beliefs, and then also the climate. But you know, at the end of the day it's still all one world. It's still all affecting us. So what we do to try not to stir too many feathers is for instance, if NOAA puts out that October worldwide was among the fourth warmest on record, we'll share that information, blast it out on the web. And just kind of take any findings from NOAA. If it's Climate Prediction Center or whatever agency it might be, and just share it as is, and not really start to hammer down on a certain side. So we do that. That takes a little bit more tiptoeing around. Again, because it still for many people is kind of a, can be a heated thing.

Rex:

Sure, that's understandable. Are there other challenges you face working in your position?

Steven:

There are some challenges, and especially because we cover national weather, most of us have been to all of these places that we're talking about impacts from a certain weather event. I give an example, I grew up in New England and I have yet to visit the beautiful Pacific Northwest. I'm talking about it every day, especially during the rainy season of the winter months, but I've yet to step foot in Oregon and Washington. And that's the hardest for a communication standpoint it can be, discussing impacts from a weather event without having ever been there. So, that is one thing.

Steven:

And then the other is getting to detail. Everybody wants to know in their city, their spot what's going to happen, but since we cover perhaps a big blizzard or a nor'easter, and we sometimes have wide views of maps, we don't get into as much detail as we could get into in local news. So there are a couple of challenges in that regards.

Steven:

And then also lastly time, if it's a very busy weather day. And I always think back to the blizzards of, I believe they were 2019, they were either 2018 or 2019. We had a couple back to back blizzards and they dumped a bunch of snow, but they also ravaged parts of the planes with flooding because there was a lot of snow melt and rain on the warm side. So that was an example of having a big story and not being able to get to all the details. Or if there's a land falling hurricane and something else big happening in the country. Usually one of those ends up not getting nearly as much time.

Kelly:

So you have mentioned that working there, there's a good work-life balance, and that you have a specific shift, which is good. What about the days of the week? Now, do those rotate so that somebody isn't working a weekend every weekend?

Steven:

We try to split it up the weekends the best we can. All of our other meteorologist end up working a weekend day. So for instance, I work Wednesday to Saturday, and then there is a crew that works Sunday to Wednesday. So there's a bit of an overlap in the middle of the week on Wednesday, but it's the fairest that we've been able to decide where we just all suck it up for a day and work one weekend day and then we have that three day stretch off. And I should say, the same applies to our producers, because we have on-air meteorology talent. And we have about a dozen meteorologists when we're fully staffed. And there are producers that are meteorologists as well. And they're great gathering content and producing segments. And they're the ones that we work with the shows that we're about to do. So the there's a nice opportunity too for people that don't want to necessarily be on air, and they have the same schedules too.

Kelly:

Yeah, and I guess that's not so bad since you have the three days off that a one weekend day isn't terrible?

Steven:

Now, I find that you can get a little bit more done. If you get into a rhythm, we'll say during a 10-hour shift you're probably going to continue to do some good work and make some good progress, whereas if eight hours hits and you have to go home. But then also that last weekend, the last day of the day off, I find myself coming in with a little bit more motivation, having rested a little bit more. So I'm, other places do four day work weeks too. And I'm hoping that they kind of catch along because they are fantastic.

Rex:

It's only two more hours above I think what the general expectation is that most people do. So it is interesting how that two extra hours can lead to three days off. And like you said, maybe reaping more benefits in terms of rest and rejuvenation and excitement about each new work week. Steven, do you have a particularly exciting moment in your career or a moment that you are most proud of that you would like to share?

Steven:

That's a good question. We cover many tornado warnings on WeatherNation. So covering those is always very satisfying, especially when we're on and something happens right when it occurs in various parts of the country. Hurricane Irene in Vermont, I'm probably proudest of that. That was a very good storm to work through, communicate the impacts. That was in Burlington, Vermont at the time. And my wife, who's also a meteorologist, she was on the podcast earlier with you. Kerrin Jeromin. So we were working at the same place together, and we worked through Hurricane Irene in Vermont, which was expected to be a very big deal in New York City and down to the south, which it was still a deal, but it was even a bigger impact in Vermont, New Hampshire for the flooding.

Steven:

And that was in 2011. So that was the most proud moment working. Working through and covering that event because we ended up conducting some surveys after of how people let weather information soak in and how they absorb weather information. And that was interesting too, because there was still a decent amount of confusion of what weather alerts mean and what to do in terms of a severe weather event.

Rex:

Did you have any takeaways about what to improve after you did that survey, Steven?

Steven:

Yes, totally from a forecaster standpoint, it was to discuss impacts more, because the forecast was spot on. There was four to eight inches of rain forecast, which verified, maybe there was an amount up to nine inches or something, but pretty much the rain forecast verified. But we didn't really do a good job of talking about what does that mean at the end of the day? What's a half a foot of rain going to do to local roads? And in the end it ended up washing out so many roads and even some houses. So we had to do better regarding that. But also a time for the viewers to explain what certain alerts mean and preparedness actions, because some of them can be confusing and then people just kind of want to know the bottom line what they should do.

Kelly:

I get confused too between the difference between a watch and a warning. I still get a little confused when I see that. I automatically assume, "Okay, the warning must be the higher priority or the one that is going to cause the most issues." But, and I thought somebody had told me that that wasn't the case. So tell me, what is the difference between a watch and a warning?

Steven:

I always, when I'm on the air, I always like to communicate it as an example of a watch means you should watch out for severe weather or impactful weather for the next several hours, and you don't have to do anything now, but you have to prepare to take action or prepare to do something if the case need be. But a warning is, something's happening now, or it's about to, it's urgent. And then you want to make sure that you have those already pre-planned ideas and then enact those. I always say with a watch, just get a mental picture of what to do in case that impactful weather event's coming to, know where your safe place is and how long it takes to get there. And then also where you'll be during severe weather or impactful weather. Know where that safe place is at school or at work or at home.

Kelly:

And I guess you need to let people know that it's always changing, correct? Because if I'm only looking at the weather say three days out and I as a watch, but then I don't look again, that probably might have changed to a warning. So I guess it's a good idea to have people check regularly?

Steven:

It is. We say that about hurricanes. Especially when a hurricane is perhaps five or seven days out, I usually say, "Check in once or twice a day with us. If it ends up being three days out, check in more, a few times a day if you're near the forecast cone." But with today's social media it also makes it more interesting because you can have an old post show up, maybe perhaps from three or four days ago somehow on Facebook or something. And all of a sudden it has some old weather information. So, I try to put in, especially if it's dated or specific to that time, or pretty specific to the weather impacts, I try to put a date and time to say, "Today is Monday, February 4th, and this is the latest expectation." That way, if it shows up later on, people know it's a bit dated.

Kelly:

Exactly. Now, for our student listeners who may be interested in working at WeatherNation, do you have any advice or tips for them as far as resumes go? What would you look for in a resume if you were hiring?

Steven:

I try to keep my resume, or I look for resumes that are shortened to the point, kind of easy on the eyes, that layout work experience, relative experience. And then the education in a nice, clear fashion. I am always a fan of one page documents. You can just hold it in one, if you want to make it, double-sided, that's fine too, to get more information on there. But some then that's easy to digest. Because no matter what industry you're in, it just seems like today that the attention spans are lower and there's so much information out there to have to comb through a long resume. If you have a lot of them, can be daunting. You can put a picture on there. I think that always helps too to see the person. It's always a nice little touch on the one page.

Steven:

And then keep the most relevant information. I had to got to shave off some of mine, because I said, "This doesn't apply anymore." I used to work at Applebee's. That's some friendliness and perhaps I have some nice etiquette when it comes to strangers, but I don't need that anymore. So, yeah, trimming off anything that doesn't really apply too well.

Kelly:

Would you look for people who maybe have a combination of the science background and maybe some communication background? Would that be helpful for a position like yours?

Steven:

It would be, having that would help. And not necessarily in meteorology, we have had some people that have been interested in astronomy or perhaps have gotten some kind of degree regarding that, or geology or anything. Any other kind of earth sciences. But having that, I mean, we also have positions that are off air, so a producer, or even some technical work such as technical directing or camera work, so those are options too. But for on air, that's going to require a meteorology degree or some kind of what Mississippi State offers in terms of something online where you can get a certificate or a smaller degree, if you hadn't concentrated at first, that'll do well too.

Steven:

And we're usually looking at least for a few years experience. That way you have the ability to talk to people well, to ad lib well. It takes a lot of ad libbing in this job. Because like I said, you're talking about various parts of the country you may not have even been to, or whether you may not have experienced either. Some people worked with us from Florida, never seen snow. And then all of a sudden they've got to talk about winter storm warnings. So having at least a few years under your belt is going to help quite a bit.

Rex:

Are there any new or emerging skills that you're finding are becoming more desirable among broadcast meteorologists coming out of college? I know for instance, in other sectors of meteorology coding language experience has become increasingly desirable outside of grounding in the physics and the math and other more traditional areas of the science?

Steven:

I would say so. I agree with you, Rex about the coding. I think that one is one of those attributes that is another good thing to have. GIS work too. There are so many files that come out that we use from the Weather Prediction Center. We use it from the National Hurricane Center. We download these KML files that we can use on air, and knowledge about how to make things look the best they can on maps is always a good one too. Writing, and I know, we talk so much about science and everything, but having good writing skills is really good. We're responsible for writing web stories in our own social media. So having that creativity and being a good writer, I always liked that as an attribute. Good, proper grammar and a little bit of creativity too.

Rex:

Was there any class outside of your major in college that you found influenced you in some aspect of your career? Maybe it was an elective, something like a fiction writing class or something, or an economics class that helped you in a way you maybe wouldn't have initially suspected?

Steven:

That's a good question, Rex. I've got to think about that. Most of those non-course classes I would say were to begin, in the beginning, because by the time, we called it the junior core, by the time we got into our third year, in our junior year, it was a heavy meteorological load. And so was senior year, because we had a thesis that we had both semesters to work on something unique. I'm trying to wrap my brain around anything else that I took. Technically there was one class that counted as a credit, I think. It was a community chorus. So I sang bass in the community chorus that would meet on Tuesday nights. Maybe that had my working my diaphragm a little bit more for broadcasting and to project a little bit more.

Rex:

That's a great example.

Kelly:

Oh, I bet.

Rex:

And I also wanted to ask, as far as ad libbing goes, when did you feel you got the hang of it? What stage of your career were you in?

Steven:

I would say mid-career. It wasn't in Virginia, because I didn't have many weather shows. I was doing it once a week and fill in. By the time I got, it would be morning show in Burlington, Vermont. So that was between 2011 to 2014. So three years after, maybe I was a late bloomer. I could get by, for sure. But our morning show was four hours long and there's so many weather hits. So the more you do it, the better you get. That's the thing I think. I'm sure you can do some other tests and skills, but the more you do it the better.

Steven:

So by the time, three years in and then working here, it's only gotten better, but like I said, we're doing about four or five hours of weather per shift, not constantly. So, it turns out to be about 20 weather hits per shift. So for seven minutes segment you're sharing about half of it because you're with another meteorologist. So three and a half minutes, 20 hits a day. It's about an hour of ad libbing every shift. And the more you do it, the better you get.

Rex:

Sure. I think it's interesting to look at expectations coming out of college versus midway through your career in terms of someone that's listening and is thinking, "What might I not imagine being prepared for right out of college?" And I think ad libbing is an interesting example. So thank you for sharing. Steven, before we end the podcast, we always like to ask our guests one last off-topic question to look

at the person behind the meteorologist. And the question we thought to ask you was, what is your favorite hobby?

Steven:

Well, you will see me going to and fro WeatherNation or wherever I'm working on a bicycle. So I try to bicycle as much as I can. That's my biggest hobby because I enjoy it on so many aspects. So I arrive, and the funny thing is, I'll do it in the winter. So I'll arrive into work, almost like Dumb and Dumber as they arrive in Colorado, of course, and they're just frozen to one another. And it just look like a mess. I'll do it in the winter and I'll arrive in this massive bundle of brightly colored clothing. So I love to bike, because it gets me, it's just my little stress relief when I'm doing it. It is good exercise commuting. So I try to commute as much as possible. Doing it at a mile high elevation in Denver is a bit of a challenge because of the amount of, a little less air up here.

Rex:

For sure.

Steven:

So, and then the, for the environment too, it gets me out to enjoy nature a little bit more and then try my little part when I can to try to save some emissions by biking. So that's my favorite.

Kelly:

How far? What's the distance?

Steven:

It's six miles each way, which takes about a half hour. So it's just the right sweet spot. It's not too far, not too close. So it's about six miles each way. So if I were to do it throughout the course of the week, every day, it would be 48 miles. So it's a decent weekly.

Kelly:

Yeah. Yeah, that's great exercise. I love cycling as well. What is it like in the snow though? That must be pretty tough.

Steven:

Yeah. I guess, I do in the winter with an asterisk there, I have three, maybe two variables, two scenarios that I don't like to bike. And I won't do it in ice. In Colorado sometimes these bikes have these big fat tires. And you see them going up and down. You see them going across fields, up and down mountains, but I have these skinny little tires and I would wreck, I don't have any chains or anything, nothing that's winter tires. So snow and ice I don't do. And then, if it's really extreme wind, it's kind of hard to do it, but otherwise-

Kelly:

Yeah, that would be tough.

Steven:

Otherwise, the cold, as long as you're covered up, it doesn't bother you too much.

Rex:

It's good to hear. And how's the drag racing going nowadays?

Steven:

It's funny. It's long past me. I have yet to return to the racetrack in quite a while. I'm sure it'd bring back so many memories hearing it and seeing the cars. The funny thing is, there was a bit of a complete circle. I was working in Virginia. My dad sold the race car because it was just too much on the weekends. And he sold it to a guy that also lived in Virginia. And we connected while I lived there. And I actually went down, it was down toward the south part of the state, perhaps south of Richmond and helped him with the car. So that was back in 2009, 2010. So it was kind of like going back in the day, but that was about the last time I had been.

Kelly:

Gosh, so now what was meant to be, selling the car to that person? That's awesome.

Steven:

I know, I know, that was a funny connection that I got to see it one last time.

Kelly:

Well, thanks so much for joining us Steven and sharing your work experiences with us.

Steven:

You're welcome then, thank you for having me.

Rex:

That's our show for today. Please join us next time. Rain or shine. **Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond** is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is produced by Brandon Crose and edited by Peter Trepke. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie and the show is hosted by Rex Horner and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at ww.ametsoc.org/clearskies, and can contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org if you have any feedback or if you would like to become a future guest.