

# SENTINEL

## Second Front Page

# Eye on the sky

*Local resident runs online weather station*

**By Sara Crocker**

*Staff Writer*

The skies in Colorado can be fickle. As the old adage goes, if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes.

For amateur meteorologist Tony Hake, the saying is more than just a cliché – he hopes its frenzied forecast becomes fact.

"In Colorado we have four true seasons, from one extreme to the absolute next," the 38-year-old Thornton man said. "You have this diverse ecosystem. Here it always seems like there's something going on."

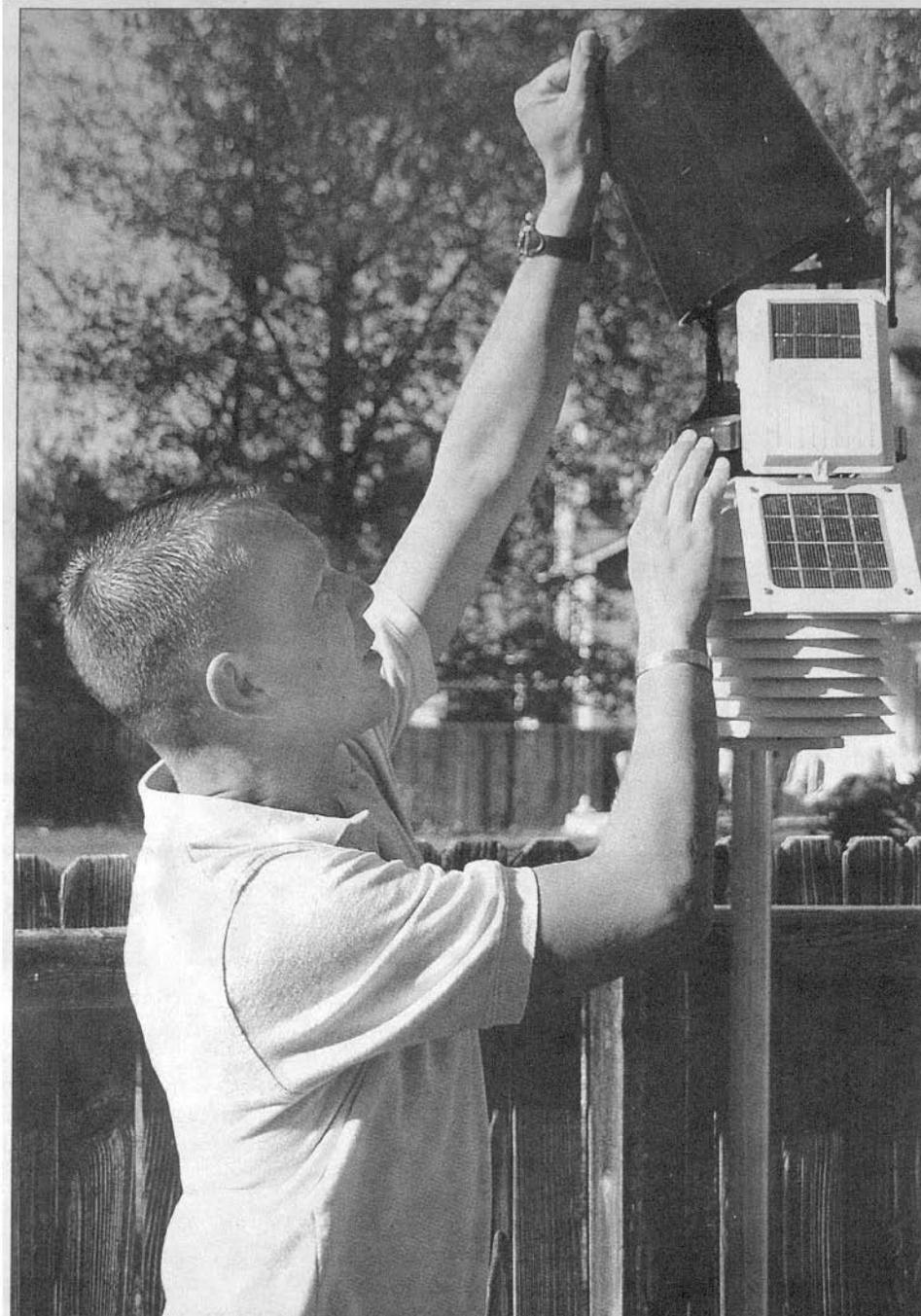
For the past year, Hake has been running a personal weather station out of his home. A small, black and white plastic dome that resembles a beehive gently hums in his backyard. On the roof of Hake's house another sensor spins, recording the speed and direction of the wind.

The readings the station collects – including temperature, humidity, pressure, wind, rain measurements and UV index – are updated on his Web site, ThorntonWeather.com.

"The Web site, it's all real time for Thornton," he said.

Getting a weather station had been an idea of Hake's and started when his wife bought him a starter station for Father's Day.

"I think it evolved as an accidental hobby," said Alisa Hake, 35. "I was a little skeptical at first, but I do have to say it does kind of grow on you."



Sara Crocker/METRONORTH NEWS

**Tony Hake** checks the rain collector on the weather station in his backyard in Thornton. Hake has been running the station out of his home for about a year and uploading the readings online to his Web site, ThorntonWeather.com.

Please see **WEATHER** Page **11A**

# WEATHER: Lightning detector's on wish list

From Page 3A

But Hake's fascination with weather had been peaked long before he received his wife's gift.

June 3, 1981, Hake was sitting at his desk in Hillcrest Elementary, 10335 Croke Drive, and the sky outside was black. That day a dozen tornados swept through the metro area. Fifty-three people in Thornton were injured and dozens of homes and buildings were damaged, costing \$10 million.

"It was very significant," he said. "I remember the principal coming on the speaker telling everyone to get under their desks."

As a child, Hake remembers being petrified of the tornados. Now, he looks forward to severe weather and says one day he wants to take a trip storm chasing.

"It would be pretty cool to

get out there and chase some tornados," Hake said. "I'd love to go out there and do something like that."

That trip wouldn't include the Hakes' son and daughter, ages 7 and 5, however.

"I think it sounds like that would be kind of fun," Alisa Hake said. "I'm not sure we would do a family vacation for the storm chasing."

Hake started learning about running a personal weather station from co-worker and fellow hobbyist John Mullen.

"Now we compare stats," Mullen said. "It's amazing how much difference there is in different parts of town."

But there is more to this hobby than two work buddies trading information. In Thornton there

are four other stations online, according to the Weather Underground Web site.

Part of the appeal is have a sense of what weather is like in a person's specific locale, said Mullen, who volunteers with the National Weather Service in Boulder.

"What happens on the news at night is pretty much a joke," he said. "That's what happened at DIA."

Hake said he enjoys running the station because he feels he is performing a public service.

Though he doesn't plan on finding a new career path in his hobby, he won't stop trying to share more about the weather.

"Ideally Santa Claus is going to bring me a lightning detector," he said.

## By the numbers

**5** - the number of personal weather stations in Thornton, according to Weather Underground's website.

**200** - the general price for a starter weather station, according to Hake.

**700** - the cost of Hake's current station, a Davis Instruments Vantage Pro2 Plus.

**1,565** - the number of people who visited Hake's Web site in August.