

## “KEEPING PACE” - #75

(Page 1)

### LIGHTNING STRIKES AUTOMOBILE:



The photograph shows the locations where three different streamers of a lightning bolt struck the trunk lid of a 1994 Ford Taurus. The Taurus was parked in its owner's driveway. The lightning also damaged the telephone wiring inside the house and popped a circuit breaker. Some of the electronics inside the Taurus were also damaged.

A lightning bolt can have over one billion volts. It can jump through a mile of air, so six inches of rubber tire and an asphalt pavement do not prevent a lightning strike.

### PERSEVERANCE:

Some cases require perseverance to solve: Flooding of the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky had covered the grounds of a mobile home park with three feet of water. Afterward, the Cable TV company said that all the coaxial cables running through the ground to every mobile home in the park had to be replaced, for a total cost of \$127,398.15.

It was not until six months later that the insurance company for the mobile home park asked me to determine if this was true. I traveled to the park and met there with the Cable TV manager, who showed me the cables. I could not see any defects in the cables, but the

## “KEEPING PACE” - #75

(Page 2)



manager and his engineer claimed the moisture had made the cables “unreliable.” I asked a mobile home resident how the reception was on her television and she stated it was fine. With the Cable TV manager in tow, I went to 25 more mobile homes scattered throughout the park. Every single resident reported that their TV reception was fine and had been since the flood.

I reported to my client that if there were any problems with the coaxial cables, the reception on the televisions would have to be degraded to some extent. I stated that the good reception was proof that there was nothing wrong with the underground cables. However, my client seemed doubtful.

A month later, my client called back and said that the Cable TV company disagreed with me and that the only true way to determine if the cables were defective was to put scientific test equipment on the cables to see if they were “within specified limits.” I said this would be fine, and that I would be happy to witness such a test.

Three months went by, and my client called to ask about the test results. I replied that a date for the test had never been set. Over a six month period, this was repeated a few more times, but even after 18 months, a test date was never set.

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