

THUNDERSTORMS: we must take them seriously!

One of our members, and not a new one, reacted with a refusal to leave the water about a week ago, when the thunder rumbled and the Park Beach closed, and a red flag went up. On the shore several members were waving swimmers to come in. One young woman refused. When she was finally induced to come in she reacted with great annoyance. She said she'd driven all the way up from NYC, and that the sun was out, and that there was no danger. One of our members who was upset by her attitude took a picture of her card. I (Judy) wrote to her, and will quote from that letter:

"... I can readily understand your disappointment at having driven so far, and then having your swim interrupted. But you have to understand that the existence of our swimming club depends on all members following the very simple rules to which we have agreed in the seventeen years of our existence. One is that we must leave the water by 7PM, and second, we can only swim when another MDSA member is present. **And another very important rule is that we MUST leave the water when the lifeguards at the official park beach have heard thunder rumbling, have put up a flag, and whistled people out of the lake.** Even if the thunder seems a long way away.

The problem is that our members do not have the right to evaluate for themselves whether or not the situation is dangerous. We must follow the rules or we won't be able to continue at our beach. That is the simple fact. Often the thunder does not rumble again, and after half an hour we can return to our swim."

An alternative to staying on the beach, especially if it is raining hard, is to continue down to the end of our beach (picking your way carefully over the many rocks in the path), then climbing the few yards up the hill to a rock overhang, under which you can shelter. A few more yards to the right of that overhang is an even deeper overhang, almost a cave. Bring a towel to sit on and wait it out. There's reading material in our locker (which should be closed in the rain), so be patient. This is an option instead of rushing back to your car.

Please cooperate. We really don't have a choice.

Judy Mage and Stephanie Bludau Tor, MDSA Co-coordinators