

Kids' book explores science of hurricane chasers

By Kathryn Reed

Flying into the middle of a hurricane – on purpose – seems a little nutty. But that is exactly what scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are paid to do.

Diane Marie Stanitski and John J. Adler capture their work in a children's book called "Teacher in the Air: Dr. Diane's Flight with the NOAA Hurricane Hunters".



Stanitski, at least when the book was published in 2006, was a climatologist and associate professor at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania. Adler at the time was a lieutenant commander in the NOAA Corps.

The book traces Stanitski's flight aboard a tricked out plane whose purpose is to fly into hurricanes to gather data for scientists to study. The science involved in the book is geared toward middle school students. And that's good because this can be an age where youngsters become enthralled with a subject matter that could become a career.

The book says, "Dr. Diane asked the scientists when they first became interested in weather. Many started observing weather patterns in middle school and sharpening their math and science skills in high school. They never realized that a degree studying science would lead to a career involving the excitement of flying into the eye of a hurricane!"

It is a well-illustrated book by Bruce David Cowden. This is what makes the book more child-like.

While the words are not overly technical, the subject matter is not that of an ordinary kids' book. Words in bold are defined in a glossary in the back. It's one of those books that is fun and educational at the same time.