Interview with Dr. Maria Vasquez, Meteorologist
by Reggie Washington, freelance writer

Reggie: Dr. Vasquez, what is a meteorologist?

Dr. V: A meteorologist is a scientist who has learned how to use scientific principles to study the Earth's atmosphere, the mixture of gases that surround the Earth.

Reggie: Wow! I had no idea!

Dr. V: The term is often used incorrectly to describe a weather forecaster or weathercaster on television. While this person may have the necessary training to be a meteorologist, often he or she is really a weather reporter. This reporter transmits the work of the National Weather Service to the general public.

Reggie: What kind of training is needed to be a meteorologist?

Dr. V: A meteorologist is a specialist who works with the National Weather Service and who has at least a bachelor's degree in meteorology or atmospheric science. For any sort of civilian or military scientific job, even more education would be necessary. A master's degree or Ph.D. may be required. Many meteorologists also obtain degrees in fields such as chemistry, mathematics, and electrical or computer engineering, for example.

Reggie: What kinds of jobs can you get?

Dr. V: Besides working for the National Weather Service, meteorologists can work for other weather forecasting services. They can also work for public or private organizations involved in studying air pollution or engaging in space exploration, for example.

Reggie: Is there anything you don't like about your profession?

Dr. V: People love to make fun of weather scientists. Cartoonists would run out of ideas if they didn't have us to make fun of! I don't mean to be a complainer, but sometimes I do get tired of people making fun of my profession. We are highly trained.

Reggie: Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your job.