

# Choosing Weather Instruments for Home and School

Ridge White  
President, Robert E. White Instruments, Inc.  
Medfield, MA

Display: A wide sample of products for home or school, including

- Digital weather stations
- Analog weather stations
- Wind instruments, permanent and hand-held
- Barometers and barographs
- Thermometers, hygrometers and sling psychrometers
- Rain gauges

Presentation: a show-and-tell about major instrument categories, with attention paid to cost vs. benefits, and ease vs. difficulty of installation and operation.

- The advantages and disadvantages of digital vs. analog stations
- Wind instruments – many choices, large price range, mounting considerations
- Barometers and barographs – the importance of pressure; testing your barometer
- Thermometers – digital and analog; where to mount them
- Hygrometers and sling psychrometers – why humidity is important; how they work
- Rain gauges – tipping bucket and simple collectors

## **PRESENTER'S BIO**

After 11 years of teaching 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English in preparatory schools, in 1978 Ridge joined his father in his firm, Robert E. White Instruments, Inc. on Commercial Wharf in Boston. He has been with the family firm for 33 years, and since 1990 has been its president. His family has been involved in manufacturing, selling and servicing weather instruments since the 1950s. An avid sailor and motor boater, he is also a teacher of navigation with the U.S. Power Squadron. They do most of their boating between Buzzards Bay and Martha's Vineyard. He and his wife Linda publish the ELDRIDGE TIDE AND PILOT BOOK, which has appeared every year since 1875.

## **Robert E. White Instruments, Inc.**

In the early years, the 1960s and 1970s, the business was split evenly between selling traditional marine instruments such as compasses, binoculars, and sextants, and selling weather instruments for homes, schools, and industry. Almost no one in those years concentrated on weather instruments, so the company became a widely recognized source for all kinds of wind and weather instruments and for advice about them. Most of Boston's meteorologists visited the shop or ordered from it. As time went by, weather instruments became the strongest sellers. The growth of digital instruments and comprehensive stations began slowly enough but eventually expanded rapidly, so that by the late 1980s and 1990s the proliferation of digital instruments, with mass production and low prices, made weather instruments a mass-market category. Competition appeared everywhere with the explosion of the internet. Robert E. White Instruments began to specialize and make itself known for hard-to-find instruments and higher quality.

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