SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 1982 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: December was cool and wet. Winds were mostly light, the major exception being the storm of 21/22 Dec. Fog was non-existent.

Temperature: The trend of cooler-than-normal days continued in December 1982, with an average daily high of 58.9°F (61.2°F normal). This is the eighth straight month of subnormal daytime temperatures. Even though nights averaged warmer than normal (44.0°F vs 43.6°F) the overall average of 51.4°F is 1°F below the 31-year December norm. High for the month, 66°F, was registered on 9 Dec (only 3 Decembers in the past 31 years with a cooler absolute max) while the minimum, 37°F, was set early morning 19 Dec. This is also the first date of a minimum 39°F or lower this season. A shelter temperature of 39°F is used as the threshold temperature for light frost in the vicinity. Normal date for the first 39°F is 28 Nov.

1982 goes into the record as a cool year. The overall average, 55.8°F, is 0.7°F below the 31-year normal and is the coolest since a 55.1°F in 1975.....also the only below-normal year since 1975. Six other years in the past 31 were below normal. The daytime high set the cool patterns with an average of 63.7°F vs 65.3°F normal. This matches 1975 and 1952 and is beat only by 1964 (62.8°F) and 1965 (63.5°F). Night-time lows exceeded the normal (48.0°F vs 47.6°F). Absolute high for 1982 was 89°F on 6 Aug, while the low, 29°F, was registered 7 Jan.

Precipitation: For a while it looked as though Dec would pass with minimal rainfall but the massive storm of 21/22 Dec changed all that. The month ended with 3.56" (= 0.54" above the 31-year Dec normal), the largest Dec total since 5.85" in 1977. The seasonal total of 13.71", as of 31 Dec, is the highest on either the National Weather Service Climatological Station record (beats 12.51" in 1965) or the California American Water Company record at Forest Lake (beats 12.96" in 1906), which extends back to Jan 1896. (Seasons: 1 Jul to 30 Jun).

The powerful 21/22 Dec storms dropped 2.87" on the station, with like amounts over most of the Peninsula and 15-20" in the nearby mountain areas. Winds were estimated to be well into the 60's on the Peninsula. 61 miles per hour was measured near the mouth of the Carmel Valley and 50's in the Monterey Harbor area. Trees down, extensive power outages and minor to moderate property damage was the rule. The early afternoon 22 Dec downpour would be considered torrential even in tropical areas. Thunder and strong gusts accompanied the final onslaught of the heavy rain at that time. Old timers in the area rank the storm as one of the (if not “the”) worst in their memory.

The heavy December total contributed to a 1982 calendar year total of 32.55", unmatched at both the Monterey station and Forest Lake. Normal annual rainfall is 18.99" at the Monterey National Weather Service Station. Rainfall for each month from Jan to Dec 1982 is as follows: 4.69", 2.37", 8.04", 3.14", 0.07", 0.53", 0.10", 1.45", 2.32", 6.23", and 3.56".

1982 was also “big” on thunderstorms. There were 11 such days, matching the record of 1978 (19 years of record).

Fog: Fog was completely absent in December (to the nearest hour), a record also recorded in Dec 1967. Seven days with fog are expected in Dec.

The year of 1982 recorded 117 days with some fog, the lowest since 1971 with 114 fog days. The minimum was 100 such days in 1969.
Wind: As previously mentioned, December winds were light except for the storm days 21/22 Dec. Wind equipment is still down at the Climatological Station so specific gust information is unavailable. Airport winds averaged 4.3 mph during Dec. However, on 22 Dec, the wind averaged 13.1 mph.