SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 1983 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: Temperatures, rainfall and fog were above normal in December while winds were light except during storm periods.

Temperature: In December, the overall average went back to above normal (32-year record) after a below-normal November – the only below normal month in the past twelve months. The mild 53.4°F overall average (52.5°F normal) was the result of the warmer-than-normal nights (47.9°F vs 43.8°F normal), since the 58.9°F average maximum was 2.3°F below normal. The warm nights were actually record breaking, since the lowest nite-time minimum for the month, a single 40°F reading (on 5 Dec), makes December 1983 the only December in the past 32 years in which the temperature was less than 41°F for one day only. Moreover, it is the first winter in 32 years that the temperature did not reach 39°F or lower before 29 Dec. A temperature of 39°F or lower in the thermal shelter is generally equivalent to a morning with frost on the ground in the area around the shelter. Two daily temperature records were set. The 53°F minimum on 9 Dec is the warmest on that date in 32 years (beat 51°F in 1964) and the 56°F minimum on Christmas Day beat the 53°F set in 1964 again, on that date. December’s maximum, 67°F, was recorded on 1 December.

As for calendar year 1983: The 58.2°F (2.7°F above normal) annual average is the third warmest on record (58.7°F in 1958 and 58.6°F in 1959). The average day-time max of 66.0°F (0.7°F above normal) is the seventh warmest on record. However, the average nite-time minimum is a least a 32-year record: 50.5°F vs 47.7°F normal. Closest competitor is 48.9°F in 1959.

Precipitation: Warm nights and cool days generally equate to above average clouds and rain in December and so it was! December’s total of 3.70” is 0.68” above normal (32 years). The rain year total (July 1 to Dec 31) now stands at 10.77” compared to a 6.88” expectation. Last year’s total at this time stood at 13.71”.

This year’s December produced 16 days with some rain compared to 8 last year, while totals were about the same, attesting to the weaker nature of this year’s December storms.

Most December storms were more intense and wetter starting just north of Monterey, and especially in the San Francisco Bay area, where amounts in December 1983 exceeded even those of 1982.

As for calendar year 1983: 37.70” fell, a calendar-year record, considering the last 32 years. But, of course the more impressive record is the rain-year (1 Jul 82 to 30 Jun 83) record of 40.64” – an all-time record (≥ 136 years of available record). Normal annual rainfall is 19.55”.

Wind: Winds were light except in the few stormy days of December namely 11 Dec (gusts to 49 miles per hour) and 3 Dec (gusts to 44 mph). Some minor tree damage and power outages occurred in the area. The airport average (18-hour day from 06 a.m. – 11 p.m.) was 5.6 mph.

Fog: The number of foggy days in December, 12, was up sharply from only 4 in Nov 83 and a like number in Dec 82. Seven days with fog is the expectation.

As for the calendar year: 118 days with fog is 14 below normal (20-year normal) – not a record.