SUMMARY OF THE FEBRUARY 1985 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: February 1985 was a cool, moderately dry month with considerably more than the usual amount of fog, and gusty winds that were a hint of spring to come.

Temperature: February 1985 gave the fifth straight month of below normal temperatures, in this case mostly due to cold nights. The overall average, 52.4°F, is 0.7°F below the 34-year average. Daytime maxima averaged exactly normal, 61.7°F, while the average of the nighttime minimums, 43.2°F, is 1.3°F below the norm. Low for the month, 36°F, was registered near sunrise on 1 Feb and 10 Feb, while the month’s high was a balmy 78°F on 14 Feb which is also a record for the date (beats 75°F in 1977). Eight days with minimums equal to or less than 40°F is the most for Feb since 1974 with 13 such days.

Precipitation: The 1.37” which fell in February doesn’t fully describe this aspect of the Peninsula weather this winter. Almost all of the rain, 1.18” came in one 18-hour period on 7-8 Feb, and there were only three days with measurable rain instead of the expected nine rain days. The month’s total of 1.37” is below the 34-year normal and is the lowest Feb total since 0.83” in Feb 1977. Ten Feb’s in the past 34 years have lower rainfall.

Rain has not fallen, in any amount, in the past 19 days (to 1 March 85). Since 15 December the picture has been one of brief periods of mostly light rainfall and long periods of dryness. The season’s rainfall (since 1 Jul) at month’s end stands at 11.46”, compared to 13.27” last year and a normal of 13.78”. The yearly expectation is 19.27”.

The two-month rainfall Jan-Feb 1985 is 2.48”, about the same as last year for the same two months, namely 2.50”. Only three other years, in the last 34 gave lower amounts for the Jan-Feb period: 2.10” in 1953, 1.70” in 1971 and 2.28” in 1972. A continuation of this winter’s trend in rainfall would have serious effects – already there is evidence of markedly stunted growth of grass in cattle grazing areas; local fruit trees have blossomed prematurely under an abnormal amount of sunny, clear-sky conditions, leaving them vulnerable to damage from late frosts and hail experienced occasionally at this time of year; and, further, early spring vegetation and tree growth, and pollen production, usually relates to an early “hay fever” season for allergy-prone individuals. Also, any extensive prolongation of the current dry spell will reduce the local water tables and draw down the reservoir water supply.

Wind: Although the average winds at the airport (for period 6 AM to 11 PM) in February differs little from that in January (5 miles per hour (mph), the spring-like gustiness showed up several times during the month. The average daily high gust at the National Weather Service Climate Station is 18 mph for Feb 85 compared to 13 mph for Jan 85. On two days, gusts reached into the 30’s range (32, 33 mph).

Fog: Another sign of spring – increased fog. The 10 days with some fog in Feb is more like mid-April to mid-May. The norm for Feb is 6 fog days. A fog day is one or more hours of fog that reduces visibility to six miles or less.

Earthquake: A minor tremor was felt on the Peninsula at 5:31 AM Sun 24 Feb. No damage was reported.