SUMMARY OF THE MARCH 1979 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: March had a split personality – half the month was foggy, the other half rainy! Temperatures were mild and winds were below average.

Temperature: After 5 months of below normal temperatures, March turned in a “plus”. The overall average of 53.7°F is 0.7°F above the 28-year normal. The mild nites were responsible for the above normal March, with 46.0°F vs 44.3°F (1.7°F above normal); the days were a bit below normal, 61.3°F vs 61.6°F (0.3°F below normal). High for the month was 73°F on 7 March while the low of 40°F was registered on 1 March.

The last day with temperatures in the 30s this winter was 17 Feb, with a 39°F reading. 39°F is usually associated with the highest shelter temperature accompanying light frost at the ground. Should that date, indeed, be our last with 30s for the year, it will be some 32 days earlier than normal, giving the area a relatively frost free late winter and spring.

Precipitation: March 1970 helped to put March ahead of Feb in the average rainfall statistics. 4.41” fell bringing the rain-year total (1 Jul 78 to 31 Mar 79) to 17.82”, as compared to 15.88” normal to this date and 18.35” for the normal yearly amount to 30 June. The 28-year March normal now stands at 2.72” compared to 2.69” for February….in part contributed by 31 March days compared to only 28 February days. There were 12 days with measurable rainfall in March which is only 3 more than normal, but 10 of them occurred between 15 and 28 March. In two days over an inch occurred (1.24” on 27 March; 1.07” on 28 March). The stormiest day in some time occurred on 27 March with heavy rain, a thunderstorm, hail and damaging wind gusts to 56.5 miles per hour (the highest wind since 61 and 57 mph on 16 and 14 Jan 1978, respectively). Hail also fell on 1 March.

Fog: The first part of the month was a preliminary to late Spring with 11 days with some fog in a continuous period from 3 thru 13 March. The 16-year average is 6 days with fog in March.

Wind: Winds in March were less than the 20-year airport average, with 6.1 mph compared to 6.3 mph. The highest gust, as noted above, was 56.5 mph on 27 March.