

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

## Soquel breathes easier after anxious night

SOQUEL — This time, the town of Soquel was prepared for the worst. But unlike the January, 1982, storm which filled downtown businesses with water and mud, Soquel escaped serious damage.

"I think every merchant and every person in Soquel is breathing a little easier," said Chamber of Commerce President Dave Tunno, who helped lead

More than 1,800 sandbags have been filled and put in place since Tuesday, said Tunno. An entire community effort, the sandbagging involved residents, merchants and students from Soquel Elementary, Soquel High and Cabrillo College.

Truckloads of earth were brought in for a makeshift levee designed to protect the







Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

## Capitola's new wharf takes it on the chin

By KEITH MURAOKA  
Sentinel Staff Writer

CAPITOLA — It took eight months and nearly \$800,000 to renovate Capitola Wharf last year, but it didn't take the latest storm long to close it once

between 25 and 30 feet of the end of the wharf is gone, City Manager Steve Burrell told The Sentinel this morning. The destruction of the wharf along the Esplanade, Burrell already declared a local

disaster, added Burrell, now the newly-built restaurant and bait shop — along with the other new wharf buildings — are believed to have sustained

little damage. "We don't know how much damage was done," he said. "It's too dangerous to go in now. All we know so far is that the waves blew out all the glass and the water flowed in."

Wharf pilings, caps and other structures were destroyed, although nobody knew immediately. Chief Bob Allen did not know the pilings underneath the wharf were damaged, it would be a long time before repair.

The city council just two weeks ago had been "beefing up" of the wharf. The pilings had been sheared off and some deck

Councilmen decided to add 10 more pilings to "beef up" the end of the wharf since repair was going to have to take place anyhow. Now, the end of the wharf is gone.

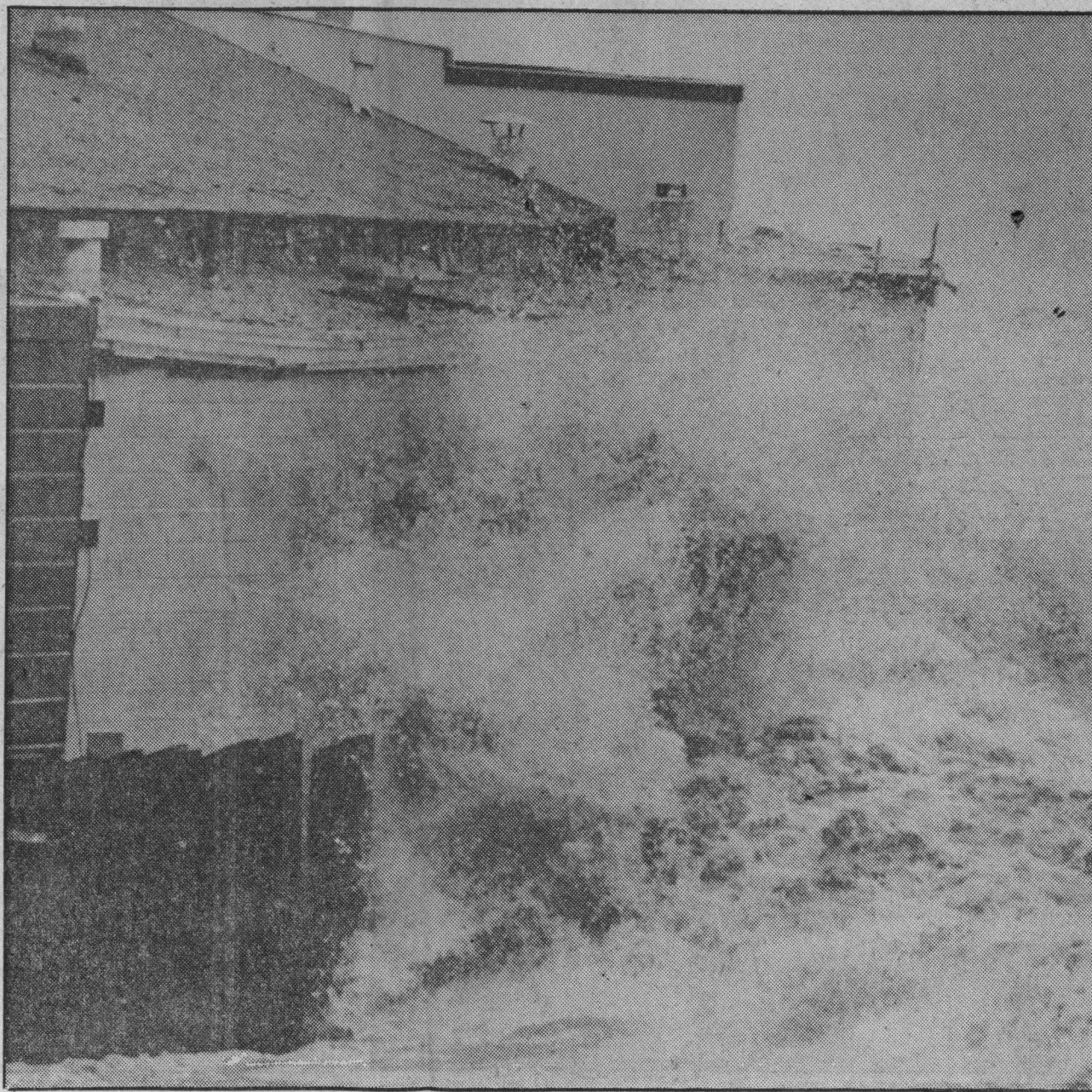
The Capitola Wharf has been a prominent feature of the community for well over 120 years. It is believed to be one of the oldest wharfs on the West Coast.

The earliest mention of the wharf is 1856, but Capitola was a shiplanding even before that — when it was known as Soquel Landing. Developed by Capitola entrepreneur Fred Hihn, in early days the wharf was a working dock. Wheat, lumber and farm products from the Soquel Valley were shipped from the wharf to San Francisco.

In latter days, it became more of a draw for tourists and fishermen. After countless storms rendered it virtually useless several years ago, the wharf changed hands several times.

It stood unused for two years. The city eventually gained ownership. With the help of the state Wildlife Conservation Board, which kicked in 75 percent of the nearly \$800,000 renovation, the wharf was reopened in October, 1981.

The new wharf buildings, however, were not completed until last May. They include a restaurant, bait and tackle shop and boat storage building. Former wharf lease holder Rick Karleen is in charge of concessions.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

person in Soquel is breathing a little easier," said Chamber of Commerce President Dave Tunno, who helped lead disaster preparations. "After getting caught with our pants down last year, we weren't going to let it happen again. We have too much invested in this town."

As storm warnings were broadcast throughout the county, the residents and business owners of Soquel began to get ready.

An evacuation took place in downtown Soquel Wednesday night during the brunt of the storm. Luckily, however, it wasn't an evacuation of people, but merchandise.

Bob and Linda Noren, owners of Soquel Auto Supply — one of the hardest hit businesses last January — went so far as to move more than half their merchandise into a waiting semi-trailer truck.

"We couldn't take a chance again," Linda Noren told The Sentinel this morning. "We moved everything that was below last year's water level."

Last January the water level inside the store was four feet.

Other businesses, such as S&S Trophies and County Bank, also moved merchandise and equipment. Nearly every downtown business owner moved inventories up to what seemed to be safe ground.

Truckloads of earth were brought in for a makeshift levee designed to protect the Heart of Soquel mobile home park from Soquel Creek. During last year's storm, swirling creek water caused heavy damage in the small mobile home park.

Large rocks were also placed along the north side of Soquel Bridge where flood waters eroded a big portion of the bridge last year.

Throughout the stormy night, water watchers walked along the creek banks with flashlights to check for flooding. The creek never crested, however.

Central County firefighters have a detailed notification and evacuation plan, Soquel station Chief Steve Negro told The Sentinel.

If Soquel Creek rises as high as 10 feet and it is still raining (the creek crests at 12 feet), the station's siren will sound for a 30-second warning. The Congregational Church will be used as a "satellite evacuation center," said Negro. There are also contingency plans to move their fire equipment to substations if needed.

"It was a little like Russian roulette," said Tunno. "After a while, all we could do was sit and wait. Everyone I talked to said 'thank God we were prepared.'"

TOP — A Las Olas Drive resident braves the waves as he runs back to his home to recover possessions this morning.

ABOVE LEFT — This morning's battering seas leaves a wave of destruction along the esplanade in Capitola.

LEFT — High tide crashed against the backs of buildings in Capitola this morning.