



'You'll Never Believe It!

By MARGARET KOCH
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Mother Nature — or Somebody Up There — answered Bishop McGucken's prayers in full measure this week, in Santa Cruz County, although the good Bishop may not have had this area in mind, specifically.

"Maybe it'll rain at last," citizens said hopefully, gazing skyward.

Sprinklers were turned off and furnaces were turned on. Winter coats came out of mothballs. The clouds seemed uncertain as to what was expected of them at first. They spat a few raindrops, then a sheet or two of hail at

night...all that white fluff on the pasture and on every redwood branch.

In our mountain-home garden, the pink-throated linnets had been busy for several weeks collecting nesting materials. There were plenty. Dried grasses, a string here and there, brittle little twigs that were extra brittle from

feeders was frozen solid. We watched them approach time after time, to try to insert their long slender beaks into the feeders, only to zip off in a whirr of frustration.

We went out and brought the feeders in to thaw, then hung them out again.

Our dogs were puzzled at first — you

Richard Hatcher climbs stairs to East Cliff Drive at River Mouth.

"Look out the window — you'll never believe it!" were the words uttered in hundreds of homes in Santa Cruz County on Thursday morning.

Sunny Santa Cruz.

Dry Santa Cruz.

Warm Santa Cruz.

Parched Santa Cruz.

Drought-ridden Santa Cruz.

Some of us thought it would never rain again.

But overnight the unbelievably balmy air of mid-summer in February dropped to a blood chilling 28 degrees as clouds — those long-awaited clouds — hovered overhead on Wednesday afternoon.

the county.

"Hope it doesn't just blow over," everyone said.

The clouds must have heard.

They waited until the dark of night, then cut loose with everything they had. They had plenty — they had been storing it up during the longest dry spell Santa Cruz County has experienced in about 100 years.

And so, Thursday morning: "Look out the window — you'll never believe it!"

I almost didn't.

For a moment I thought upon awakening that I must have been transported to New England during the

the long dry spell.

Thursday morning the linnets perched forlornly about our bird feeder. They were out of work — unemployed. Everything was covered with snow, including the seeds we put on the feeder.

The four chipmunks that put on regular, spectacular acrobatic shows for us, stayed curled in their warm nests until late. When they came out they frisked lightly over the snow on the feeder, sending flurries flying as they dashed and skidded, chasing each other like small, mischevious boys on a lark.

The hummingbirds were completely puzzled. The red sugar water in their

could almost see it on their faces (do dogs have faces?) Ours do.

Then, after observing the strange white stuff for awhile, they decided it was harmless, and they even tested it with their tongues, cautiously. And so snow came to Santa Cruz County again. It comes once every five or six years, not always as lavishly as it did this year, we had inches up in the mountains.

It is good for us, in a way.

It's as if Someone Up There gets weary of the mundane grumblings down here on earth every once in awhile — weary enough to let us know that there is something we can't control — the weather.

*Photos by Sentinel's
Bill Lovejoy And Pete Amos*



A truck driver concentrates on snow covered Murray Street.



A family frolics in snow on Clinton Street.



Highway 17 was a picturesque winter scene with snow covered trees.