



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Barbara Fargo and her daughter, Megan Williams, get caught in the rain.

# Storm lashes county

## Falling tree kills woman

By **MARIA GAURA**  
Sentinel staff writer

**SANTA CRUZ** — The worst winter storm in years dumped torrents of rain, hail and snow on Santa Cruz County, causing widespread damage and one death.

More than 4 inches of rain fell in Boulder Creek over two days, and more than 2 inches in Santa Cruz.

A 50-percent chance of rain is forecast for today, lessening to 20 percent Monday.

Felton resident Clair Day, 56, was crushed to death Friday afternoon when a huge oak tree fell onto her car on Trinkling Creek Road in Lompico. Day's young son was trapped in the back seat for two hours before firefighters and a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. crew managed to free him. The boy was uninjured, according to Zayante Fire Chief Ken Boynton.

Snow fell for two hours in the Summit Road area Saturday morning, according to an engineer at the Department of Forestry's Burrell Station.

"We're at 1,100 feet, and the temperature here was 36 degrees,

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so it didn't stick," said Eric Hoffmann. "But people up the road at 1,500 and 1,800 feet had 2 to 6 inches of snow."

Brief, intense hailstorms blasted the county Saturday morning, leaving an icy slush that sporadic rain showers soon washed away.

The storm caused dozens of small mudslides in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but no serious damage was reported. County geologists monitored the earthquake-fissured Summit area for potential slides, but found the area stable, according to county spokeswoman Dinah Phillips.

Chief Boynton said that on Friday, Day had just stopped to drop her mother off when the oak tree fell without warning and smashed into her Toyota Corolla, Boynton said. Day apparently died immediately. Her mother had walked away from the car moments before the tree fell, he said.

"It was a massive tree, 3½ to 4 feet in diameter," he said. "It broke the car in the center, literally bent the frame right to the ground."

The unstable tree shifted dangerously as firefighters worked to free the boy, but a PG&E boom truck arrived and made rescue possible. The truck, normally used to lift telephone poles into place, secured the tree and pulled it from the car.

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# Storm/ Area takes a whipping

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Rescue workers pried the car open with the Jaws of Life and pulled the boy free.

"The tree looked healthy," Boynton said. "It seemed to fall out of the blue."

Blizzard conditions and hundreds of falling trees turned out the lights in 300,000 Northern California homes Friday, according to PG&E spokesman Lyle LaFaver. Some 100,000 of those customers, mostly in the Sierra foothills, were still without power Saturday night.

The worst hit areas in Santa Cruz County included Boulder Creek, Summit Road, Aptos, Corralitos and Watsonville. About 1,700 homes in those areas remained without power Saturday night, and "they could be without until Sunday morning," LaFaver said.

Cabrillo College canceled classes Friday after the power went out.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Angry-looking clouds hover over ridgetops Saturday afternoon, dumping sporadic showers.

"The power was out all Friday night at my place, up Eureka Canyon Road," said Joe Cutler, owner

of the Corralitos Market. "At noon (Saturday) the temperature in my house was 43 degrees — it was not a good place to be. The power came on at 2 p.m., and boy were there a lot of happy people."

Many rural residents suffered doubly from the cold because they couldn't safely light fires in their quake-damaged fireplaces. A 30-hour blackout at the KOA Campground near Manresa Beach put a definite damper on the normally crowded President's Day festivities.

"More people stayed than we expected," said campground employee Barbara Robinson. "They

stayed around and waited for the power to go on."

Area rainfall reports for 24 hours ending at 6 p.m. Saturday and including the season's totals (since July 1, 1989) and those of last year at this time follows. Normal Santa Cruz rainfall for this date is 20.12 inches.

	24 hr.	48 hr.	Sea.	Last year to date
Aptos	.70	1.80	8.71	13.47
Ben Lomond	.52	2.68	17.65	25.64
Boulder Creek	.49	4.21	20.76	20.74
Capitola	1.96	3.68	12.69	24.30
La Selva Beach	.30	1.44	na	na
Live Oak	1.35	2.38	9.49	12.20
Natural Bridges	.77	1.79	8.62	12.94
Santa Cruz	.89	2.26	10.18	15.06
Scotts Valley	.77	2.77	17.01	23.02
Soquel	1.59	2.74	10.79	na
Swanton	.86	1.22	12.11	16.45
Watsonville	na	1.91	9.66	10.49

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San Jose car theft

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