

# 'Eastern' weather hits Santa Cruz County

By EMILIO ALVARADO  
STAFF WRITER

People from back East say Californians never talk about the weather because there isn't any. Well, after yesterday's tempestuous weather, which brought gusting winds, rain, sleet and snow, people are talking up a storm.

The mercury did the limbo last night, dipping to 32 in Watsonville and leaving windshields covered with ice, the ground coated with frost and commuters turning up the collars on their coats this morning. Yesterday's 49 degree high reading was a season low for the area.

Although the weather conditions yesterday made for a dramatic show, they did little to relief the

drought. Most of the low-lying areas received about a tenth of an inch of rain. Bonny Doon got most of the precipitation, about half an inch. Winds were gusty at about 60 miles an hour along the northern coastal areas.

The storm rolled in from Alaska, forecasters said, and cold conditions are expected to continue through tomorrow, with overnight lows dipping into the 30s. Tomorrow's forecast calls for partly cloudy skies and the high is expected to reach the 40s.

In the Santa Cruz mountains, "White Christmas" was probably being hummed as snow hit the area. Snow flurries were reported on Highway 17 and throughout the high range areas. The snow level

ranged from 500 to 1,000 feet above sea level.

At the California Department of Forestry station in Felton, the rain gauge was frozen this morning.

Caltrans did not close highways in the area and reported no major problems. Highway 17 did have a few patches of ice but workers stood by in case they had to spread sand on the roadways.

The California Highway Patrol in Santa Cruz County reported two minor, non-injury accidents on Highway 17 last night, but no other major mishaps. In north Monterey County, the CHP reported 15 accidents yesterday, seven of which were attributed to road conditions. Only one of the

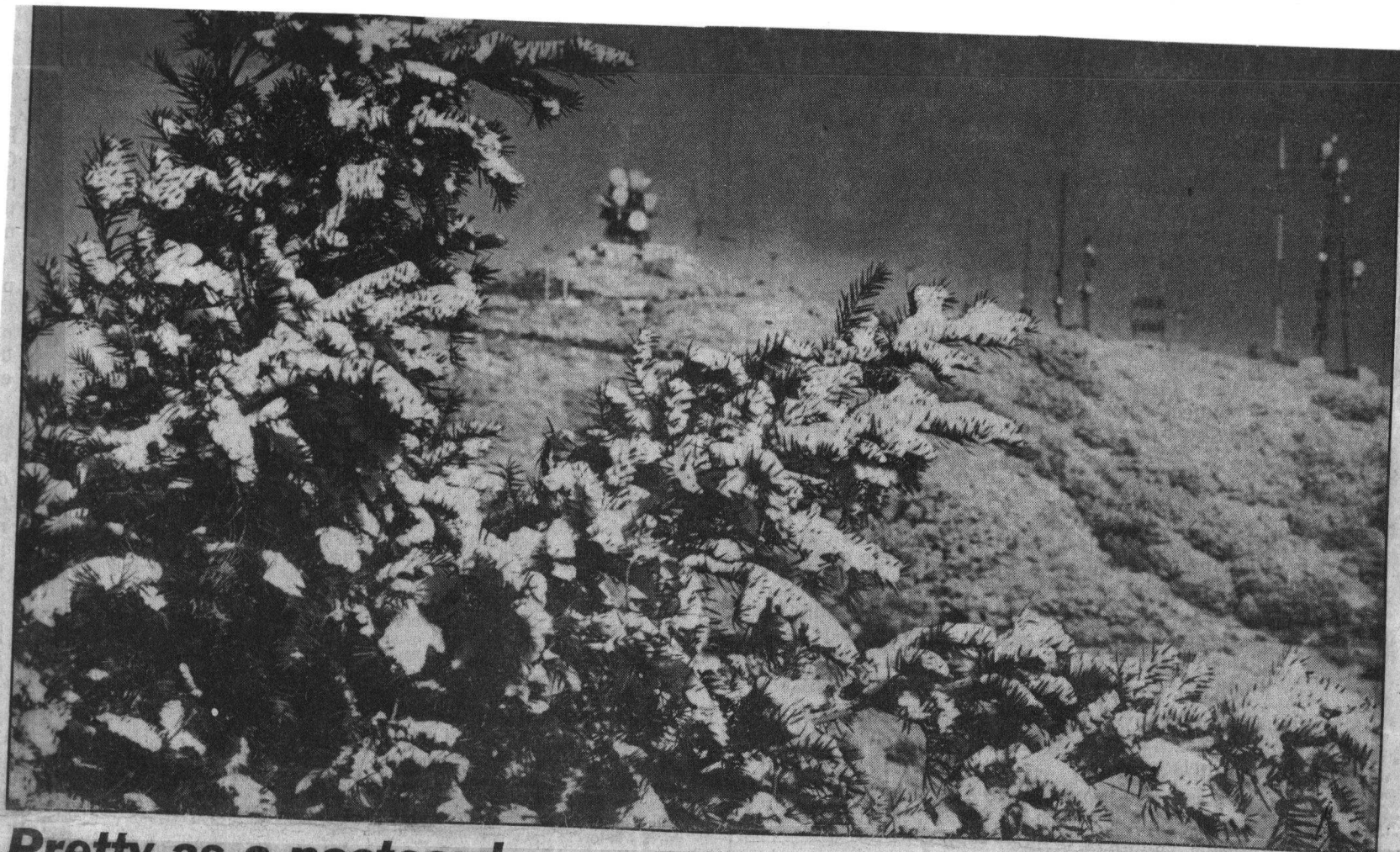
accidents involved injuries.

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office dispatcher must have felt like the lonely Maytag repairman. The sheriff's office received only eight calls last night, a low number for a weeknight.

Watsonville police also reported a quiet night.

## RAINFALL

	Last 00 hrs	Season Total	Last Year
Felton.....	0.20	4.14	6.64
Santa Cruz .....	N/A	N/A	N/A
Soquel .....	0.16	3.09	3.29
Aptos .....	0.15	2.85	3.70
Freedom.....	0.07	2.58	4.02
Corralitos .....	0.09	2.83	4.67
Eureka Canyon.....	N/A	N/A	N/A
Watsonville .....	0.10	1.49	N/A
Aromas .....	0.10	2.50	4.10
Pinto Lake .....	0.10	5.50	8.50



## **Pretty as a postcard**

A Douglas fir tree dusted with snow framed Loma Prieta at the Santa Clara County line this morning.

Kurt Ellison