

Wind causes havoc in county

By GUY LASNIER

STAFF WRITER

A frigid, brisk wind continued to blast Santa Cruz County today after sending area firefighters and PG&E workers scurrying after fallen trees and downed power lines yesterday.

The winds brought down more trees and lines today. Two dogs were electrocuted at about 7:45 this morning when they wandered into hot power lines dangling on Coleman Avenue in Zayante.

Yesterday, falling trees damaged houses in Felton and the upper Branciforte area.

A one-acre grass fire was touched off just before noon yesterday by sparks from arcing power lines at 585 Mt. View Road, Branciforte Fire

Captain John Faylor said.

"We've had problems with arcing lines when the wind blows in that area, and it was blowing," Faylor said.

He said a tree caused minor damage to a house at 1770 Jarvis Road.

Most of the incidents with trees and power lines occurred between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. yesterday. The winds, reported at between 25 and 30 miles per hour with higher gusts in the mountains, seemed to die down in the afternoon and evening.

County communications dispatchers had their hands full with calls throughout the morning.

An Acacia tree hit a house at 212 Redwood Drive, Felton, shortly before noon yesterday.

Felton Fire Chief Mac McDonald said a large Douglas fir tree with three trunks directly across the street from the house fell soon afterward, bringing down three utility poles and a transformer.

McDonald said a third tree came down later causing minor damage to the same house.

He estimated gusts in the San Lorenzo Valley hit 50 miles per hour. "We had a fairly busy day, but all the stuff was minor," McDonald said.

In Soquel, the winds flattened a slat shade house at Soquel Nursery.

"It was pretty much all over," PG&E spokesman Bill Leonard said of wind causing damage. He said approximately 20,000 to 25,000 persons in Santa

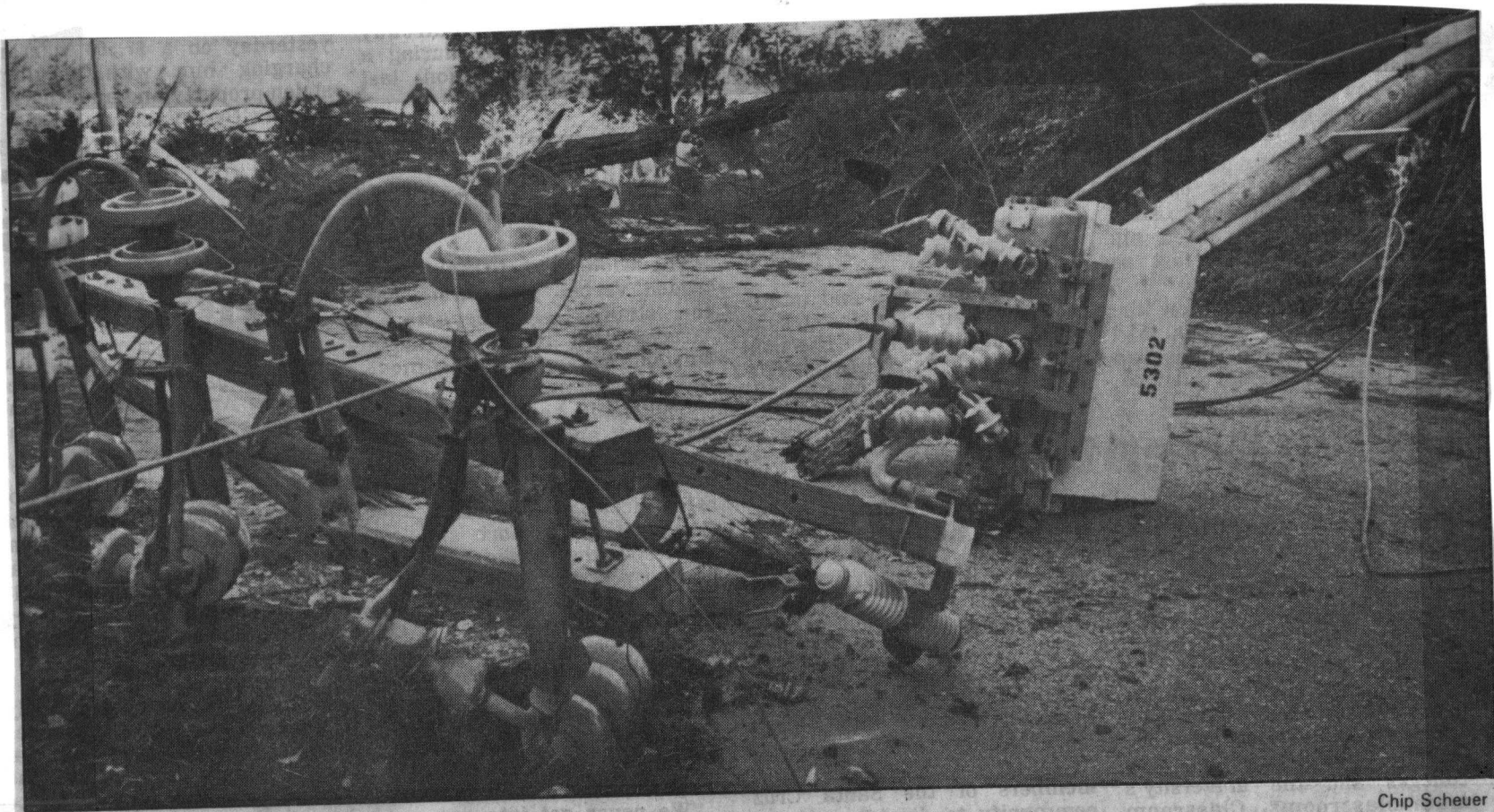
Cruz County had power interruptions caused by the winds.

About 1,350 customers were still without power at 9 a.m. today, Leonard said.

PG&E workers worked through the night to restore power. A 60,000 volt transmission line from Santa Clara County to a Big Basin substation that fell Wednesday was back up yesterday afternoon, Leonard said.

Throughout the San Francisco Bay Area some 100,000 customers were affected, he said. A PG&E lineman suffered serious injuries after falling 40 feet from a utility pole at about 4 p.m. in Santa Clara, Leonard said.

"It was a long day yesterday," he said.



Chip Scheuer

PG&E crews had a long cleanup ahead after a tree fell on Felton home, taking utility lines and poles along.