



Shaminder Dulai/Sentinel

A new weather station sits atop the O'Neill Sea Odyssey building at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor. The unit is used for studying wind currents coming from the ocean and data is made available for school field trips and online to the public.

New weather station teaches kids about climate

By **ROGER SIDEMAN**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Eastside residents can now find the most accurate weather report for their neighborhood on the Web, thanks to a new weather station that is also providing a valuable hands-on lesson for school groups.

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Mounted atop the building at Twin Lakes Beach that houses the Kind Grind cafe and El Palomar Restaurant, the weather instruments were purchased by O'Neill Sea Odyssey, a nonprofit ocean education group that is also housed there. New computer hardware and software feed the real-time data gathered by the instruments to the Internet.

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Although climate change is not part of the sea odyssey's curriculum, the middle school students who visit the center will learn the basics of temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity and rainfall — all of which are updated on the Web every five minutes.

On Wednesday, fourth-graders from Linscott

Charter School in Watsonville gazed at color-coded weather charts dating to February, when the weather station first went online.

"What this shows us is weather data that we can collect and compare to put together patterns over time," said Adam Steckley, an instructor for the program.

Boaters, too, are finding the Web site useful, Haifley said, because the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor is located next the weather station. The National Weather Service's nearest weather gauge is on the Westside at Long Marine Lab.

The O'Neill Sea Odyssey, serving about 170 school groups each year, was able to buy the \$20,000 station with a grant from the Ludwick Family Foundation.

Weather data from the new station can be found online at www.oneillseaodyssey.org.

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