

# ✓ It's called quake country, folks

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11-9-89  
SANTA CRUZ — Chances are slim that another 7.1 earthquake will be centered in this county in the next few decades, but the likelihood of major earthquakes striking within a 100-mile radius of here remain high.

This is still earthquake country. And you can bet Santa Cruz County will feel most earthquakes that occur near here.

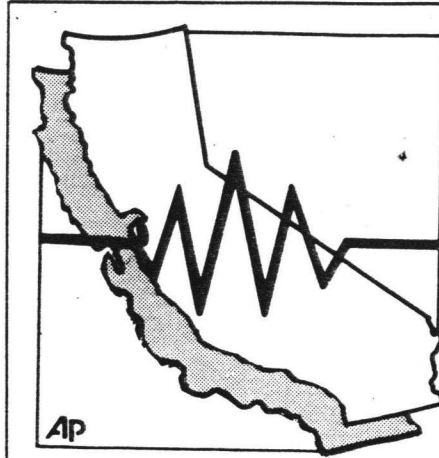
"If there was even a bigger earthquake in Hayward, say a 7.5, that would be equivalent to a 7.1 here again," said Steven Ward, a UC Santa Cruz researcher.

geophysicist.

"The best thinking to date is that this segment will not rupture again in an event of this size for quite some time," said Karen McNally, professor of earth sciences and an earthquake expert at UC Santa Cruz.

"But that's not true of the Hayward Fault or the north part of the San Andreas Fault," McNally said.

In fact, experts estimate that there is a 50-50 chance that the San Francisco Bay Area will suffer a quake greater or equal to last month's in the next 30 years. There are three fault segments in the area, each of which is being given a



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20-percent chance of having a major quake within the next three decades.

A major quake on any of those faults would send shock waves to Santa Cruz County. Similar shock waves from the October quake caused devastation and death in the San Francisco area, 90 miles from the epicenter near here.

"Generally the waves in San Francisco were less than they were here," said Ward. "There are other factors that amplify them. If you're on ... mud it's as much as a factor of five in terms of shaking."

McNally said there is also the potential for quakes along other

offshore, fault lines that have caused temblors of up to 6.5 in the past.

"Those could be quite close, and while not as large as this earthquake, nevertheless the shaking could be quite severe," McNally said.

McNally said that one good aftereffect of the October quake is that "Santa Cruz now has fewer unsafe buildings than it had before. If people don't take them down and reinforce them, nature will do it sooner or later."

Still, not all that could fall has necessarily fallen. "People should check the structural foundation of

## Quakes/ Part of the landscape

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their homes whether they withstood this earthquake or not," she said.

McNally has spent most of her life studying earthquakes and she readily admits they scare her. But what scares her more is the way people ignore the inevitable.

"What really scares me is the things people have built. Not the earthquakes themselves but structures that are not safe," McNally said.

"People tend to be apathetic, they postpone things, because it costs money," McNally said. "I know that Santa Cruz was not a county that took the lead in getting reinforcement for unsafe buildings. I hope now they make it a priority."

McNally said she was aware that a Santa Cruz city building official, Dave Steeves, had attempted to get an ordinance passed that would have forced property owners to make older buildings more quake-safe. Steeves' proposal died after

the business community complained about costs.

"The lifetime of political officials for re-election is much shorter than earthquake reoccurrence time," McNally said. "It's easy to pass that responsibility along to the next person."

"It's important we be able to get beyond that and have support for people who take these stands," McNally said.

"Because we *will* have more earthquakes," McNally said.