

# Public to pick memorial

## Three finalists for Santa Cruz quake statue

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Everyone who was nearby when the Loma Prieta earthquake jolted Santa Cruz has a story to tell. Soon, they'll have a vote to cast, too, in a public contest to choose an earthquake memorial for the victims and buildings lost in downtown Santa Cruz during the Oct. 17, 1989, disaster.

Unlike San Jose's Quetzalcoatl statue, a \$500,000 monument erected last fall that has been roundly criticized as looking like a giant dinosaur dropping, Santa Cruz's statue will be chosen by residents rather than bureaucrats.

From March 1 through March 17, any resident of Santa Cruz County will be able to vote from among three proposals. The top vote-getter will be installed in downtown Santa Cruz by this summer.

"The earthquake's such a personal thing. Folks who lived through it ought to have a say," said Susan Wandruff, a city recreation supervisor helping coordinate the contest.

The city has \$10,000 set aside for a monument. That money was part of the \$650,000 donated by private citizens from around the world who saw Santa Cruz's wreckage on television in the weeks after the quake. Civic leaders have delayed the memorial until now, they say, because they wanted to focus on rebuilding the downtown.

The three finalists — a landscaped time capsule, lighted bronze column and brick fountain featuring a Phoenix — were chosen by the Santa Cruz City Arts



Santa Cruz architect Bill Clark, left, and artist E.A. Eckerman with their memorial model, which includes a phoenix rising from rubble.

KAREN T. BORCHERS — MERCURY NEWS

Commission last year from a field of 15 entries.

The voting will take place in the atrium of the McPherson Center for Art & History, 705 Front St. "Any county resident who was alive during the quake can vote," said Wandruff, thus setting the minimum age at 5½.

The three finalists are:

■ A time capsule. Architect Mark Primack of Santa Cruz proposed building a masonry arch, 4 feet high, and encasing a waterproof time capsule that would contain news clippings, city records and audio-taped messages

from people who endured the earthquake. Built of old bricks saved from the rubble of the Cooper House, the arch also would be covered with earth and planted with flowers and other vegetation found on the Pacific Garden Mall before the 1989 quake. The memorial would be placed atop a large public planter box that now sits outside the site of the former Cooper House.

Primack said he could build the structure completely with volunteer labor. In all likelihood, none of the \$10,000 would be spent, he said.

See **MEMORIAL**, Page 2B



Mark Primack's design would feature tape recordings of survivors.

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## ■ MEMORIAL

from Page 1B

As for the audio messages: "After the quake, there were no locals around who had lived through a big earthquake in Santa Cruz. Our idea is that anybody who'd been in this quake could come in off the street and tape a minute or two of advice. They could say whatever they want to whichever generation of Santa Cruz will have to go through the next big earthquake. People will open it one day and say, 'Hey, that's my great-grandfather talking.'"

■ Phoenix. A 10-foot brick sculpture and fountain showing a bird rising from rubble is suggested by Santa Cruzans Bill Clark and E.A. Eckerman. The work would include a recirculating fountain, with water pouring from broken water pipes onto scattered bricks. Built almost entirely of red bricks, it would be

about 20 feet wide, with a bronze head on the bird.

Possible locations, they said, include SCOPE Park near the Town Clock, and an area in front of the two-story parking garage at Cedar and Church streets.

The piece would "symbolize the rebirth of commerce, prosperity and the spirit of our city," they have written in a mission statement.

Clark is a landscape architect and Eckerman is an artist who specializes in stone masonry.

■ Memorial column. Santa Cruz author and historian Ross Eric Gibson proposes a 10-foot high steel column, decorated with a bronze finish, that would be lighted from the inside and depict images of the lost treasures of downtown Santa Cruz: the Cooper House, the Oddfellows Building, the Hihn Building and the people killed along Pacific Avenue.

It would be built in a Victorian

style, with a street lamp globe on top and a plaque.

"We're memorializing not only the people who died, but the wonderful historic district downtown that is no more," said Gibson, who also writes a weekly history column in the Mercury News.

Ken Wormhoudt, the chairman of the city arts commission, said a previous contest to choose downtown art was a big success. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people voted in 1993 for sculptures to adorn the rebuilt sidewalks of Pacific Avenue, he said. And although cynics might say the arts commission is hoping to duck the inevitable controversy that usually follows public art by allowing the public to make the choice, Wormhoudt said the commission had decided to allow a vote even before the Quetzalcoatl debacle in San Jose.

"Everybody in the community shook a bit one way or another," said Wormhoudt. "We figured it

would be appropriate to involve everybody."

Santa Cruz suffered more damage relative to its size than any other city in Northern California.

The quake caused destruction estimated at \$115 million along the Pacific Garden Mall, destroying 29 commercial buildings, many of them on the National Register of Historic Places. Three people died.

Since then, about half of the demolished buildings have been rebuilt, and all sidewalks, trees, streets and benches have been replaced in the central downtown business district.