

# Couple watch dream home edge toward Summit cliff

SUMMIT — Sue and John Mace were married last Saturday.

Tuesday, their dream home began to drift over a cliff to oblivion.

"It's gotten worse every day," Sue Mace said Friday as she stepped out over a space between their house's porch and its front door.

Through the crack between the porch and the door, the ravine below could be seen.

Sue looked in the front door and called to John. He called back, then emerged, stepping over the crack while carrying a box of possessions. John put the box in the trunk of their car, then went back into the teetering house.

"I wish he'd get the hell out of there," Sue said. "I don't know what he's doing."

Sue is a structural engineer, and she knew all too well what was

happening to her house. She bent down and looked at the stilts the house was built on, pointing out which ones were buckling.

A propane tank lay beneath the house, softly leaking gas. Sue said the tank was almost empty. Leaking gas was the least of the Maces' worries.

Sue and John have been together for three years. They tied the knot Oct. 14 and were on their way to Sausalito for a honeymoon when the quake hit, throwing the road back and forth in front of them. They turned around and headed home.

If they hadn't, they might never have seen their house again. The house nearest theirs on Old Turnpike Road was split in half and tumbled slowly down the ravine as each aftershock hit.

Scientists believe Turnpike Road

was within a few miles, perhaps as close as a quarter-mile, of the quake's epicenter.

John Mace went back into the precariously perched house Friday afternoon to try to grab more possessions.

The Maces are among the lucky few who have earthquake insurance. "We actually discussed the insurance just a month ago," Sue said. "I thought it was too expensive but he wanted to keep it."

Sue Mace walked gingerly about on her porch. Fissures in the ground led beneath the house, to the damaged stilts.

"It always had a little motion to it," Sue said. "But we never thought it would have to stand up to a 7.0 earthquake. I don't guess anything like this can stand up to a 7.0 earthquake." — Tom Long