



Pearl Sears Lake's house survived 1906 quake, but not the 1989 temblor.

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Woman's Victorian home didn't survive Big One II

SUMMIT — Pearl Sears Lake wore a bathrobe over her clothes Friday afternoon as she wandered about her crumpled home here, and she was still shivering.

"My mom and dad built this house and moved into it the night before the 1906 earthquake," Lake said, holding the robe tight at the collar and looking at the grand Victorian style house that had been visited by Tuesday's earthquake.

The porch had fallen in. All the house's corners were leaning toward the middle. The roof jutted at a crazy angle. It looked as if a strong gust of wind would blow it over.

"I'm sleeping in a chair around the back door," Lake said. "I hope it doesn't rain. I can't even use my bathroom as it is."

Building inspectors have already

told Lake that she cannot go in the house. She was stretching red plastic tape across the front of the porch, tying it to unstable rain gutters that bent when touched.

"I was in the kitchen, leaning against the sink when it happened," Lake said. "It just flattened me."

When she emerged from the twisted house, Lake found destruction all about her. An elevated water tower to one side of her house was completely demolished; a scrambled mess of wood and tin was in its place. A barn 100 feet away leaned backwards at a radical angle, as if punched by the world's largest prizefighter.

The barn was still leaning Friday, the water tower was still demolished. But Lake said she

thought there was a possibility that her house could be straightened again and lived in, but inspectors have deemed it too dangerous even to enter.

Neighbors had been helping her survive. "People have been bringing me food and stuff," she said. One neighbor chased off a group of would-be looters who tried to get the front door to open.

"One house in this neighborhood tumbled right down the hill and anybody that had propane gas, their houses just exploded and burned down," Lake said.

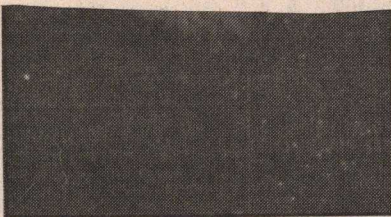
"I guess I'm just lucky," she said, tying the red tape across the house she had lived in all her life. "But don't ask me what I'm going to do now."

— Tom Long

larly inner-city youth.

It was exciting to see how some of the communities hit hardest by these problems were able to mobilize community involvement and harness the positive influence of youth leaders. By far the most emotional and empowering part of this conference was hearing from the young people dedicated to making their communities a better place.

Realizing that Santa Cruz County was probably three years behind the problems which currently face Santa Clara, San Francisco and Oakland, the group from here thought this county was in an ex-



Scott MacDonald

Powerful testimony was provided for young people whose lives have been affected by drugs. It was alarming to hear that one 18-year-old mother of two did not know what AIDS was until she discovered she was infected by the

The conference was a rousing success. Representatives from the California Council on Children and Youth and the California Youth Authority were involved and will be promoting the approach used in Santa Cruz, as a model for other counties.

It is important that we, too, recognize and praise the commitment expressed by the Santa Cruz County youth involved in this effort. Additionally, we as community need to assist these young people in every way we can to help them follow through with their commitments. We can choose to recognize