

Here's Where The Masses Would Go In Case Of War

At first glance George's Log Cabin Cocktails in Felton seems like the last place you'd want to go in case of the threat of nuclear war. There's no basement and the closest thing to a food supply are the microwave-eated sandwiches George's serves up to nondiscriminating customers.

But the longtime San Lorenzo Valley watering hole is listed in Federal Emergency Management Office data of possible shelters — listed alongside every public and commercial building with more than 400 square feet of space that's accessible to the public.

Last summer crews of engineering students under FEMA supervision surveyed buildings as part of the government's Crisis Relocation Planning program.

The program calls for evacuating the population of the nation's cities and risk areas into rural areas in case of the threat of nuclear war. Santa Cruz has been named a host area for a possible 600,000 residents from San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The government put buildings into two categories: those which could be upgraded into shelters by mounding soil around the walls and roof, and those which for structural reasons cannot be upgraded.

The data is listed in two computer printouts as thick as Manhattan phone books.

The information includes such salient details as the number of burners and commodes in a structure; whether it has a basement and how many people can be fit into the premises based on a formula of 40 square feet per person — less than the space allowed for state prisoners, notes Lt. Bill Plageman, county emergency coordinator.

Engineers calculated how many yards of soil need be mounded on the building to protect inhabitants from radioactive fallout, and how far away this soil can be found.

And they rated the protection factor of each building using government specifications. Protection Factor category X, for example, denotes a building which has protection so minimal as to be unacceptable. An example of this would be a standard wood-frame house, according to Frank Wilson, an architect working on crisis planning at the FEMA office in Santa Rosa.

PF category 8 is the highest rating, and includes such structures as mine shafts, underground tunnels, and state Emergency Operating Centers. Each category number is 40 times better than its predecessor — hence, spaces in PF category 1 have 40 times greater the fallout protection capability of spaces in category 0.

Locally, shelters were rated up as high as PF category 4-plus.

"We're dealing with gamma radiation, which is similar to X-rays," said Wilson. "The more mass we can throw between the source of the radiation and the shelter, the better you are. You can upgrade a building by pushing a six-foot berm of soil against the walls."

Alas, George's doesn't even rate as "up-gradeable," according to FEMA. It ranks in PF factor category X, and the building cannot be made safe from radiation for structural reasons.

There is, however, room for 25 evacuees on its ground-level floor.

Better you should go down the road a bit to the Felton Guild Restaurant. It, too, has a PF category X rating, but there's space for 56 persons, so at least you and your friends can greet Armageddon together. And the restaurant can be made safer if your friends were to mound 252 yards of dirt around it. This dirt is only one yard away, so better bring a shovel or two.

The better shelter buildings are listed in the second government printout.

The ID building on the Pacific Garden Mall, for example, can offer 315 people shelter space in PF category 4-plus. Its spacious basement can hold 280 additional people.

The Sentinel building can offer 975 persons protection in PF category 0 — which is considered the next step-up from the protection offered by a wood frame house — and 504 persons protection in PF category 2-3.

The basement of the county government center — the only bonafide public bomb shelter in Santa Cruz — can offer 3,765 persons protection in PF category 1; 7,600 persons in PF category 2-3 and 700 persons protection in PF category 4.

Others seeking the best-existing-fallout protection in Santa Cruz might head for the Captain's Galley restaurant on the Boardwalk, which is listed

as having room for 110 persons in PF category 4-plus.

Town-gown antagonisms might disappear faster than you could say "leukemia" in case of nuclear war. Several campus buildings show spaces in the higher protection factor categories. The Applied Science Building has room for 1,160 people in PF category 0, 2,940 in PF category 1, 1,180 in PF category 2-3 and 690 persons in PF category 690. There's communal care space (or "congregate care," in FEMA lingo) for 2,908 persons.

Other buildings with room for people in PF category 4-plus — indicating thick walls and underground structures — are Seabright Villa, 1370 spaces and the railroad tunnel on Green Street, 1275 spaces.

Of course, the prospect of waiting out World War III in a railroad tunnel with the rest of the country dead or dying, the nation's cities smoldering, and your friends incinerated or sick from radiation poisoning may seem depressing.

Survivors can take heart, however, in the words of Eugene Rostow, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, who said during his Senate confirmation hearing last year: "Japan, after all, not only survived, but flourished after a nuclear attack. Depending on certain assumptions, some estimates predict 10 million dead on one side and 100 million on the other, but that is not the whole population."