

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel file

Pearl Sears Lake's home was hit hard by '89 quake.

Trailer still home on the summit

By TOM LONG
Sentinel staff writer

SUMMIT — Pearl Sears Lake was in the kitchen of her seven-room farmhouse at 5:04 p.m. on Oct. 17.

The farmhouse had previously survived a major earthquake. In fact, Lake's parents moved into the house the day before the 1906 earthquake that devastated much of Northern California. Lake had grown up hearing about that quake.

"I was a little prepared," said Lake. "My mother had told me about that earthquake."

So when the floor began rolling violently back and forth beneath her feet, Lake knew her fate was out of her own hands. "It threw me down on the floor and it didn't do any good to try and get up," Lake said.

For the next two days, Lake slept in a rocking chair outside the house on a back porch.

Within a week, Lake had purchased a small trailer and set it a few hundred feet from the

house. The Red Cross, her church, her neighbors all helped, bringing food and water and moving possessions out of the house, which was quickly deemed unliveable by county building inspectors.

When she first moved in the small trailer, Lake's two cats moved in along with her. Another cat meowed her way into the trailer as well in those days following the quake. That cat had six kittens.

Now Lake is still living in the trailer with seven cats.

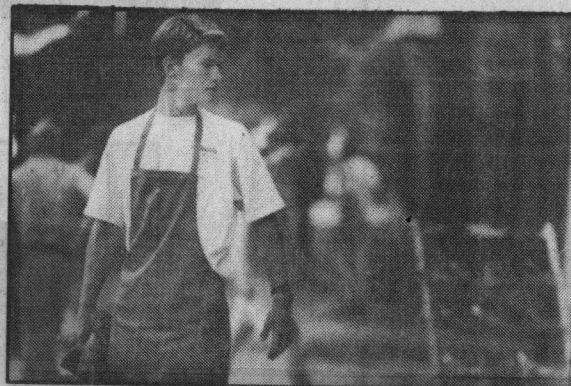
"I never expected to be in here a year," said Lake, looking out on her land from a wooden porch built onto her trailer. But Lake is determined to rebuild.

"I wouldn't leave this house," she said. "You couldn't pry me off this place."

And while the earthquake left her homeless and caused undeniable hardships, Lake refuses to become bitter.

"It's just one of those things," she said. "Time goes by, work goes on."

Quiet hero's earthquake memories



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

By DONNA KIMURA
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Nate Johnson was preparing potatoes to be cooked at a Pacific Garden Mall restaurant when he felt the ground shake.

As the Oct. 17 earthquake grew bigger and bigger, Johnson dodged under a doorway to avoid the falling microwave ovens, cascading debris and hot water shooting from a broken pipe.

When it was over, he was one of the quiet heroes of the disaster who walked outside to the mall, stood deep in the rubble and searched the stores across the street for injured shoppers.

"I was down there till probably 7:30,"

said Johnson, shyly. "I was picking up stuff, helping cops put up yellow tape and bringing seniors out of the Palomar Inn."

Johnson, now in the 12th grade at Santa Cruz High School, also watched to make sure no one looted Potato Works, where he had been working since the summer.

The earthquake cost him his job.

"I filed for unemployment because I didn't have time to search for another job right away," he said. "I got a little bit of money then."

Johnson, 17, now works part time at another Santa Cruz restaurant, but spends most of his time going to school and training for cross-country meets.

A.C. Sent.
10-17-90

REFERENCE

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
Oct. 17, 1990