



David Hornback — Mercury News

Wearing slickers against Saturday's rain, members of the Linck family walk up the path to their home on Laurel Road

# Mountain toll rises ever higher

By Stephen Robitaille  
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The Quake of '89 continued to spit victims out of the Santa Cruz Mountains on Saturday as damage estimates soared and residents battled rain, aftershocks, landslides and their own crumbling homes.

At least five landslides were reported Saturday, and showers and chilly temperatures added discomfort to disaster. But the raid did not trigger the massive mudslides that authorities and residents had feared.

An aftershock measuring 4.6 on the Richter scale rolled through the area about 3 p.m., ratcheting up victims' tension levels but causing no new major damage.

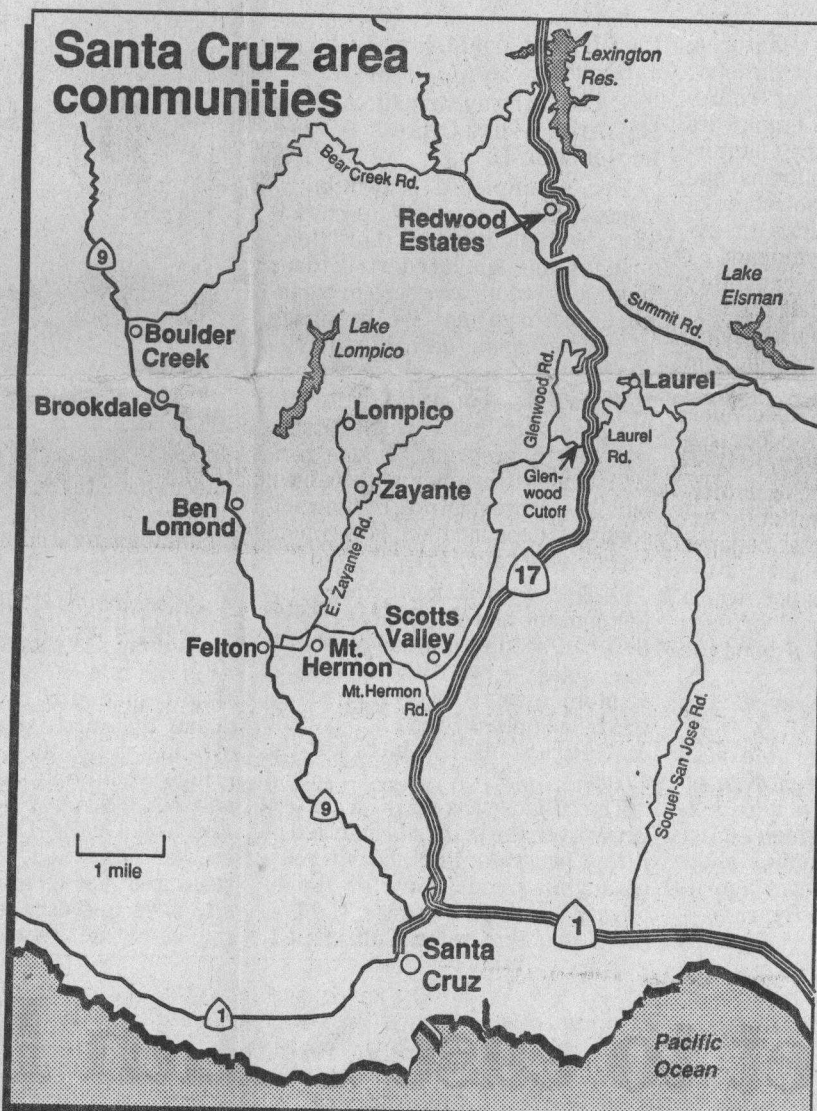
Many mountain dwellers — who view slides, floods and power failures as overhead on an unfettered lifestyle — stayed at their ruined homes. They have started to regroup and rebuild.

But other places were worse: As the mountains give up the pockets of devastation they have held close for the past five days, authorities are staggered by what they see.

"The closer you look at the problems, the worse the problems are going to become," said Barbara Macallair, director of the Zayante Fire District, a hard-hit community southeast of Boulder Creek.

In the Lompico and Zayante areas, the number of destroyed homes rose from 30 to 92 after firefighters, Red Cross volunteers and Explorer scouts conducted a door-to-door inspection. The number of dwellings rendered uninhabitable by quake damage rose from 200 to 323. In all, 1,400 of 3,500 homes in the 13-square-mile fire district had some form of damage, said Chief Ken Boynton.

The shelter set up at the nearby City-Team Ministries summer camp began to fill up. At lunch, 22 adults and 14 children sat down to a meal of chicken, rice and vegetables. Sienna Mira-Eaton, 43, and her three children, aged 2, 6 and 10, were



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among the diners. "My baby is especially freaked out," Mira-Eaton said. "Any time anything sways or the wind blows, she jumps into my arms." Right after the food was put on the tables, the power went out.

Lompico and Zayante are particularly hard hit because of the kind of houses there, Boynton said. Most were built in the 1930s as summer homes and fishing shanties. They have been converted to year-round use but lack modern quake-thwarting features.

Regardless, some mountain residents chased off building inspectors and refused to give authorities their names or addresses, fearful that their homes would be condemned before they have a chance to rebuild.

Some people were even looking to move into the neighborhood.

On Lake Boulevard in Lompico, a potholed one-lane road now crisscrossed with quake damage, Susan Wilder was peering over a fence at the house she had just bought — and still plans to occupy on Monday.

The house, down a steep set of stairs below the road, has a retaining wall that has begun to bulge, but Wilder says that's OK.

Highway 9, the state road that is now the lone northern link between Santa Cruz and the rest of the Bay Area, was crowded with cars and trucks stuffed with household possessions and building materials.

In Boulder Creek, things were fairly quiet as residents dug out — but the 3 p.m. aftershock was "just enough to keep people a bit goosey," said Sam Robustelli, the community's assistant fire chief.

State highway crews cleaned up two minor landslides along Highway 9. Another slide closed off a portion of Laurel Road, but the road remained open for emergency vehicles.

At the Loma Prieta Union Elementary School District, a two-building district on Summit Drive, the elementary school has cracks in walls and its concrete slab foundation and has almost no windows. The middle school has a cracked foundation. It might be salvageable, said district board member Robert Rauh, but for now the nearly 600 students have no place to go to school.

"We contacted adjacent districts," Rauh said. "There is some hope that Saratoga High School might have some room but everybody else so far says they're full up."

Mercury News Staff Writers Marcos Bredon, Aleta Watson, Robin Musitelli and Lorenzo P. Romero contributed to this report.