

# ✓ Downtown business felled by quake

By MARDI BROWNING-DOUGLASS  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Forty years in the furniture business began coming to a close Saturday and Sunday as Jerry and Terry Spodick called it quits, their General Furniture store the latest business casualty of the Oct. 17 earthquake.

"Once we found out that the building had to be demolished, that set the ball in motion," Jerry said, shaking his head. For their going out of business sale, they've packed furniture into the tiny location at 1003 Pacific Ave., since the building at 1001 Pacific Ave. collapsed and has been demolished.

Jerry's dad Saul Spodick started the business in 1949, and was shortly joined by his sister Francis Drake. In 1975 Jerry bought the business and kept it going with the help of his wife Terry, a third-generation furniture retailer whose grandfather used to do business with the Spodicks.

Drake, who still works for Spodick's, said she's sorry it all has to end.

"It makes me very very sad," she said. "You invest a lot of your life in a thing and you don't like to see it liquidate, so to speak."

Jerry said his dad is sad to see the business go as well.

"He's been shaken up by the whole thing, that's for sure," Jerry

said of his dad, who's in Hawaii for the week. "He's sad to see the old building go, sad to see something that he started all those years ago just end."

Jerry said he's saddened, too, to see a downtown that doesn't live up to its potential, and that he'd like to see a renewed community spirit along with renewed buildings following the quake.

"There was a time in Santa Cruz when this was a lovely place to be," he said, sighing. "Now downtown just isn't all it could be, it doesn't have the sense of community and enjoyment that it used to. It would be ideal if we could revive the spirit that used to be downtown."

Terry said a link between the beach and business communities would be great for starters, with a center for families the focal point.

"We'd love to see a link between the beach area and downtown with a small convention center to support a really good auditorium space," she said.

The devastation caused by the earthquake added to a general feeling of disillusionment about downtown that had been festering for quite a while, Jerry said.

"Part of our disenchantment is that for a businessperson there are a lot of decisions being made that don't make any sense," he said. "A simple thing like allowing a Navy



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Terry, left, and Jerry Spodick's furniture store and business did not survive the earthquake

ship to come into port shouldn't become the political issue that it does. I don't understand it and I don't go along with it."

Terry said that the city has been very supportive of businesses since the Oct. 17 quake, but the bureaucracy has been frustrating.

"We got a letter from Chi Pants the other day, and at the bottom it said 'the earthquake was profound but the red tape was devastating,'" she said. "Even before the quake, simple things like getting a bench removed because winos hang out around it took 3-5 years, and the bench is still there. It just took them 3-5 minutes to decide the building had to come down."

The couple received a tremendous of support from their cohorts and from their competition following the quake, Terry said.

"I made some phone calls, and an hour and a half later we arrived at the door and we had 40 people out there," she said. "All of our competitors had crews and trucks here waiting to help us. There were all these business owners hefting sofa beds around, it was amazing."

"Actually, I think Mel Haber worked harder here than he does in his own store," Jerry said. "We had furniture stored all over town, in garages and auto show rooms, everywhere."