

Earthquake - 10 yrs and later

# A moment of silence at 5:04 p.m. — Watsonville remembers

## Community remembers 15 seconds in history

By JOHN VIEIRA

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — Holding a clock frozen at four minutes past five o'clock, Watsonville Mayor Oscar Rios stood in silence before a crowd gathered at the Watsonville Community Hospital on the 10th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake.

In that moment of silence, those who were living in Santa Cruz County at the time of the earthquake couldn't help but to think back to where they were exactly 10 years ago to the minute.

Rios recalled being in the Lettunich Building, on the corner of Main and Beach streets, at the time of the earthquake. Upon exiting the building after the quake, Rios recalls seeing people walking around downtown in a daze trying to ascertain what had just occurred.

Ten years later, the courageous acts of sacrifice which turned everyday people into living heroes are not forgotten. No one can ever forget Watsonville's only earthquake fatality, Elida Ledesma Ortega, who was

'Earthquakes are going to happen as long as we live here in California. We have to be prepared. We have to be ready.'

— Watsonville Mayor Oscar Rios

killed by falling debris when she shielded her grandson to save his life. Nor can one forget the untold hours of time valiantly offered by public safety personnel who were forced to place the concerns of family and friends aside in order to meet the needs of a larger family — the Watsonville community.

These thoughts of the past were brought to the present as bagpipes filled the moment of silence with a mournful tune, thus ending the passing memories, bringing to bear the present and allowing the gathered crowd to focus on their preparations for the coming future.

"Earthquakes are going to happen as long as we live here in Cali-

fornia," said Rios. "We have to be prepared. We have to be ready."

Earthquake preparedness was the focus at the Watsonville Community Hospital Sunday in observance of the Loma Prieta earthquake's 10 year anniversary.

As part of the event, residents shared their memories of the earthquake for a videotaped "community oral history" project. Another highlight of the day was the public introduction of Watsonville's first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class.

The CERT concept was developed by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a

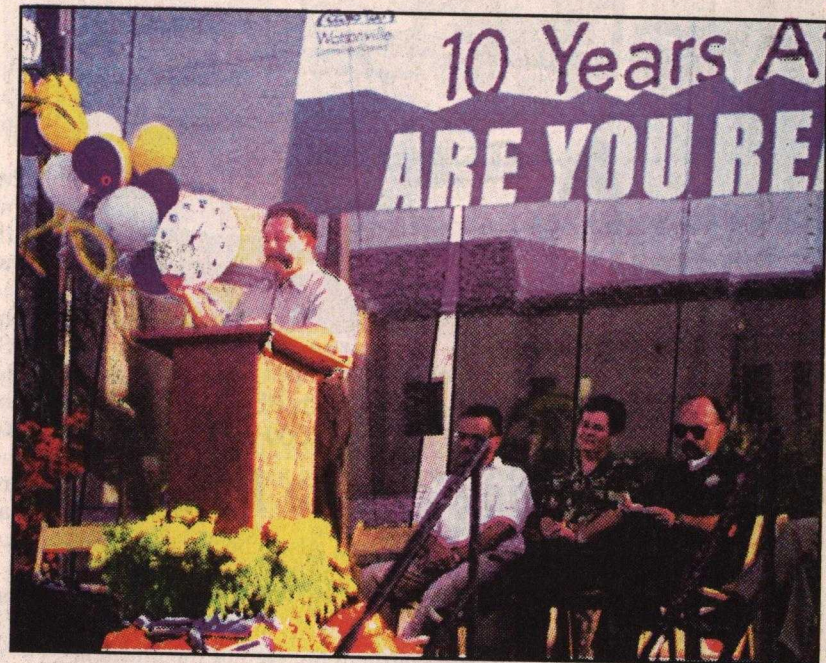
major disaster in California. It also confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs after a disaster.

"We're training people how to take care of their neighborhood for the first 48 hours," said Watsonville Police Lt. Chris Gallagher. "What we hope to do is bring your neighborhood together."

The event also featured a display of disaster response equipment, including fire engines, hooks and ladders, a new Hazardous Materials vehicle, new sheriff's department search and rescue vehicles, an AMR ambulance and a CAL Star helicopter.

Visitors were able to take tours of the hospital facility and browsed through various informational booths during the event. The guided hospital tour included a visit to one of the hospital's 18 private birthing rooms and demonstrations of the hospital's new Tiny Toes Internet Nursery.

The hospital also had tours of the new Monterey Bay Wound Treatment Center, acupuncture/pressure



John Vieira/Register-Pajaronian

Watsonville Mayor Oscar Rios observes a moment of silence at 5:04 p.m. Sunday before a crowd gathered at the Watsonville Community Hospital.

demonstrations from the Wellness Center and crash cart demonstrations by emergency room staff.

"We're glad that many people

came out and got information on how to be better prepared," said Barry Schneider, CEO of Watsonville Community Hospital.

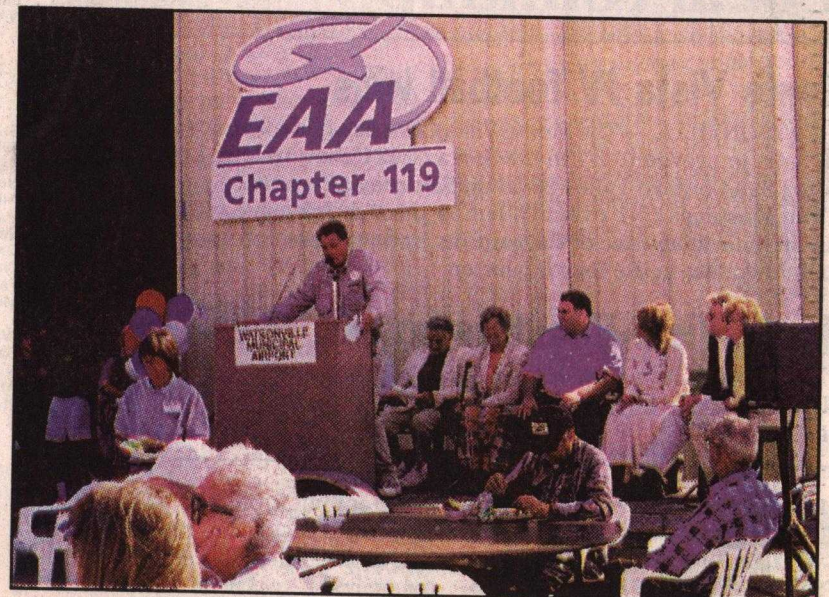
## Airport was staple for survival

By ALYSSA D. CLAGG

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — Even the Rolling Stones' flamboyant front man, Mick Jagger, showed up at the Watsonville Airport with music mogul Bill Graham to survey the earthquake damage after the Loma Prieta earthquake, donating \$500,000 to the community after it literally fell apart 10 years ago Sunday. The airport has continued to act as a foundation for community survival and celebrated its efforts of recovery and opening of a new education center during the sixth annual airport open house Sunday.

As most roadways, including major highways, remained closed immediately after the earthquake hit, the airport remained the only concrete way to fly in the 500,000 pounds of food and supplies needed to keep the community sustained



Courtesy of Bob Stiller

Dedicating the new Watsonville Aviation Education Center at the Watsonville Airport.



## Photo exhibit highlights anniversary

Violet Lucas of Watsonville examines a collection of art that was generated by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake at the '89 Quake Remembrance Exhibit Sunday at PageCraft/Copy Bean, 550 Main St., Watsonville.

# St. Patrick's pays off debt

## Earthquake commemoration celebrates community

By DAVID PACINI

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — On the 10th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake Sunday, religious and community leaders helped bring a sense of closure to the devastation wrought upon St. Patrick's Catholic Church by the natural disaster.

That closure was most dramatically demonstrated as Fathers Mike Miller, Greg Sandman and Peter Crivello joined former mayor Betty Murphy, vice-mayor Betty Bobeda, and councilwoman Judy Doering-Nielsen as they took turns burning the pages of the church's reconstruction mortgage.

"It's been a very long journey," said Sandman. "This was done by the extraordinary people of this community. How can we say enough to our loving God and to each other?"

The mortgage represented the approximately \$4.5 million in debt incurred by St. Patrick's when earthquake damage forced the rebuilding of the church. That debt was repaid by donations from the community, including a large gift from Lloyd Alaga that put the church back into the black.

At 5:04 p.m., the time when the ground shook for 15 seconds a decade ago, the church's steeple bells tolled and helium-filled green and white balloons sailed heavenward as parishioners observed a moment of silence.

That somber moment contrasted sharply with the overall jovial mood of the event, which was marked with lighthearted banter by many of the speakers and with joyful music by a number of groups. Those groups included the Humberto Camacho band, a band organized by Eleazar Cortez, and the Centennial Pep Band of the Pajaro Valley.

"It's been really inspiring to watch St. Patrick's come up out of the ashes and become more beautiful and safer than ever," said pep band director Terrell Eaton.

Crivello, who served at St.



David Pacini/Register-Pajaronian

Father Peter Crivello (from left) Judy Doering-Nielsen, Betty Murphy, Betty Bobeda, and Father Greg Sandman burn the mortgage of St. Patrick's.

Patrick's in 1989 but now works in Salinas, told the crowd that his fondest memory is of the day in 1994 when parishioners were able to re-enter the church after years of observing services in the Notre Dame school gym.

"I think it's significant," said participant Alice Leyland. "It shows the

community feeling for the church. I got teary-eyed during the demolition. It was devastating."

Former mayor Betty Murphy asked parishioners to remember concert organizer Bill Graham in their prayers. Graham raised \$100,000 for the church.



A musical group organized by Eleazar Cortez performs at the 10th anniversary commemoration at St. Patrick's Church.

camp outdoors. Hundreds of relief missions were flown in and out of the airport by both private and military aircraft, recalls Watsonville Airport operations supervisor Sharon Reeder, bringing not only food, blankets and clothes, but also baby food.

"It was amazing — there was just a huge need for baby formula and the next thing you know, there was 33,000 gallons of it," Reeder said. "There was no power or anything — this was the emergency hub for the whole area."

According to California Aviation magazine, private pilots from Northern and Central California made more than 450 flights into the airport after the earthquake with the needed supplies, and as many as 57 relief planes were counted on the airport grounds at one time after the quake.

"I really want to thank all the people who helped fly in the airlift because (the earthquake) devastated everyone and we were all in a bit of shock, but it felt great to be doing something positive," Reeder said. "The airlift demonstrated the airport's capabilities to immediately bring needed things in an emergency and show people's immediate response to the disaster."

As well as the aircrafts and antique hot rods on display during the airport celebration, the brand-new Watsonville Aviation Education Center was also dedicated in conjunction with the Loma Prieta quake anniversary.

A combined undertaking with

ceremonies Bill Lewis (speaking) welcomes guests and center organizers (left to right) city council member Judy Doering-Nielsen, school board member Dan Hankemeier, PVUSD coordinator and vocational instructor Connie Hoularis, aviation and vocational instructor for the PVUSD John Davi, president of the Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 119, school board member Sharon Gray and president of the Watsonville Pilots Association Mike Corder.

the Watsonville Chapter 119 of the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Project School Flight is a new education initiative for eleventh and twelfth graders to learn a trade and to become better equipped to find jobs.

Housed in the Aviation Education Center, a 3,500-square-foot hangar formerly used by Granite Construction, 40 students a year will be introduced to aviation as they work on a four-year-long project to construct an actual aircraft.

"This is an incredible opportunity for students to learn aeronautics basics and help them go on to a college or enter the work world," said Connie Hoularis, coordinator and vocational instructor for the PVUSD, as she spoke at the dedication. "I'm looking to double the program in years to come."

Project School Flight was the concept and vision of airport manager Don French and took 2,500 man hours to complete by volunteers of local air organizations.

"The Watsonville Airport is the most important asset this commu-

nity has and we will always have it here," said city council member Judy Doering-Nielsen during the ceremony. "The partnerships developed with the airport and the community are coming together to help children in the community and ultimately provide jobs in the future."

EAA Chapter 119 member Arlo Reeves contributed to the center's opening by displaying two hand-crafted videos inside the center — one demonstrating airplanes and flying and the other documenting the airport's relief efforts. The five-minute video highlighted the earthquake damage, airlift pilots bringing supplies and many other hard-to-forget events.

Nearly 500 airplane rides were also given during yesterday's events for the nickel-a-pound plane rides sponsored by the Monterey Bay Chapter of the International Organization of Women Pilots, which was a record number for the airport.

The Watsonville Fire Department also hosted a tri-tip barbecue lunch in the new education center and a pancake breakfast was held from 9 until 11 a.m.

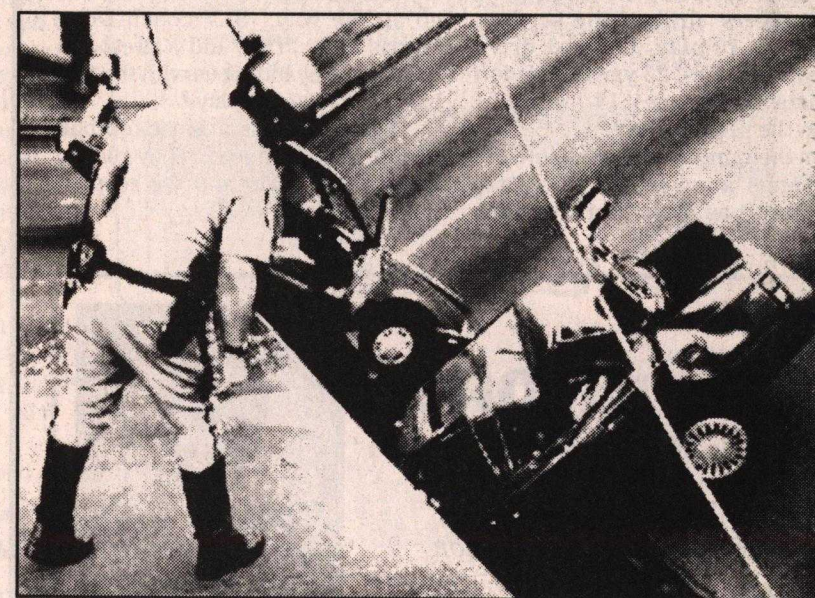
## Bay Area marks quake anniversary

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Certain radio stations went silent, announcements rang out to hundreds of subway riders, and church bells chimed all at exactly 5:04 p.m. Sunday in San Francisco to commemorate the moment the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake struck.

Residents across the San Francisco Bay area traded memories of both the heroism and tragedy the severe tremor left in its wake.

In San Francisco, survivors of the 1906 quake — which nearly left the city in ruins — joined residents recalling the '89 quake for a celebration in the Marina district. Fire trucks, helicopters, fire boats and mounted police officers were all expected to give demonstrations of earthquake preparedness.

San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown was scheduled to join the festival, as was the Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade band, the Salvation Army Band, and traditional Chinese dancers.



San Francisco Chronicle

A CHP officer peers into the gap created by a collapsing section of the Bay Bridge on Oct. 18, 1989.