

# Aftershocks send families running from their homes

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The faithful quoted scripture and throngs of Watsonville residents fled from their homes as a series of earthquakes that made store windows resemble jello rattled downtown nerves all morning.

Many repeated the routines of Oct. 17 and set up temporary camps in their front yards and on public grounds. All over town, people gathered on sidewalks and streets and outside their houses.

At Watsonville High School's Geiser Field, five families huddled on blankets and braced themselves as the ground shook. Water containers, packaged food, flashlights and radios lay haphazardly on the grass.

"We just took what we could grab real quick," said Juana Rodriguez in Spanish. The oldest of her four children, whose ages ranged from 5 to 6 months, scampered about in a state of confusion.

Their restlessness heightened as another aftershock caused the grounds to roll. "*Madre santa* (holy mother)," Rodriguez shouted as the clusters of families edged in closer. "They don't know what's going on," she said of the wide-

eyed children.

The families chose the site over their Lincoln Street homes across the street that shook "like the house is falling," said Esperanza Santillan.

The women said they were willing to stay out on the field, where after the October earthquake they camped for four nights, until all rumblings stopped.

Such was the attitude of several families stationed on the edge of Callaghan Park, site of an unofficial tent village in the aftermath of last fall's earthquake. Maria Corrales said after a water tank broke at her home on Hecker Pass Road she snatched up her two youngest children and headed for the Sudden Street home of her relatives.

Her family was already at Callaghan, where comfort was given to Eralinda Pimentel, who in her native Portuguese prayed aloud and stretched her arms outward whenever the earth quivered.

On the corner of Maple and Marchant streets, the families of Guillermina and Teresa Hernandez also camped on their front lawns. Their neighborhood was one of the main casualties of the Oct. 17 earthquake. In the

days following the disaster, the Hernandezes were among the many local residents who lived in their cars.

While they had all been asleep when the ground started rolling this morning, they lost no time in running outdoors, Guillermina said.

Over at the downtown Plaza, a contingent of Jehovah's Witness representatives continued spreading the gospel within sight of the leveled grounds where stores once stood.

"We must have faith in Jehovah," cried out Julia Valverde as a shaker struck, causing buildings in the downtown core to wobble.

With a religious pamphlet clutched to her chest, she called the attention of her fellow witnesses to the windows of the Monterey Savings building, which quivered in wave-like motions as onlookers gasped. A male companion immediately began citing scripture verses that warned of impending disasters.

"It has been prophesized," he warned.

Further north on Main Street,

See STREET page 2 ▶

# STREET

► From page 1

residents of the Resetar Hotel began hovering in the lobby and the front of the building as soon as the first earthquakes hit.

Soon after he felt the first quake at 6:37 a.m. Clark Millison descended the four flights of stairs from his room to the ground floor. Normally he would take the elevator, but one of today's earthquake's rendered it useless when it was knocked off its rails.

Scheduled to be picked up for work at 7:30 a.m., at 9 a.m. Millison was still pacing in front of the hotel along with fellow residents. One of them, Jack Higgins, was about to embark on an investigation of the fifth floor, where a blind woman with a bad heart had not been heard from.

"It's gonna take all the guts I got," to go back in, he said.