

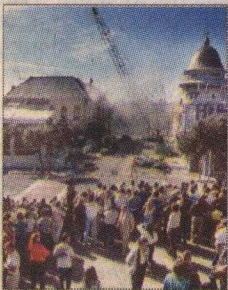
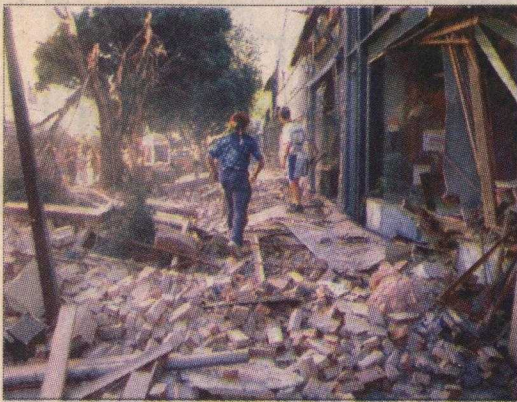
LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Sentinel

Sunday, October 17, 1999

Aftershocks of the Loma Prieta earthquake reverberate today

Ten years after



Fifteen long seconds changed our world and the way we look at it

IT TURNED BRICKS into deadly missiles and shook our notion of solid ground. The Loma Prieta earthquake hit at 5:04 p.m. on Oct. 17, 1989, killing 63 people throughout the Bay Area. In Santa Cruz County, it drove thousands of Watsonville residents from their homes, shoved dozens of mountain homes into ravines and forced downtown Santa Cruz into a hugely successful but still-incomplete rebuilding process.

After a decade of labeling it a magnitude 7.1 tremor, qualifying it for "major" status, scientists have now adjusted their yardstick to declare it a 6.9 "moderate" tremor. True, the loss of life was relatively slight by international standards, but there was nothing moderate about the way it reshaped Santa Cruz County.

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INSIDE

■ A special section examines the earthquake, its aftermath and impact on Santa Cruz County residents

Page E1

■ San Francisco construction boom exposes faults in quake-retrofit laws

Real Estate, Page F1

■ The old Pacific Garden Mall was a weird and wonderful mix of trees, making it a veritable 24-hour arboretum

Bay Living, Page C1

■ Recent divisions threaten to undo the post-quake spirit of cooperation

Editorial, Page A10

15 seconds

that shook our lives

Earthquake 10 yrs



Santa Cruz set politics aside for rebuilding effort

By **DARREL W. COLE**
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — In the decade before the Loma Prieta earthquake, Santa Cruz business owners and political leaders were usually at odds.

Then, as now, progressives controlled City Hall, and their slow-growth political platform didn't exactly jibe with the Chamber of Commerce agenda.

After the quake, with rubble at their feet and a downtown in need of rebuilding, the traditional adversaries formed an uneasy but necessary relationship, if not an actual alliance.

Some city leaders suspended their anti-development leanings to help devastated stores get back in business. They fast-tracked building approvals, hired can-do Redevelopment Director Ceil Cirillo and set up special loan programs.

The results are obvious: a new Cooper House; a thriving Cinema 9; spruced-up pedestrian alleys; re-

Please see **COOPERATION** — PAGE A7

'Quake baby' Elizabeth Cupples will be celebrating her birthday today with her mom, Marilyn. Ten years ago, Marilyn was cradling her newborn child, who was delivered by Caesarean section at the old Community Hospital during the 6.9 magnitude quake.



A birthday to remember

Child delivered moments before nature's sound and fury

By **TRACIE WHITE**
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Marilyn Cupples didn't get to hold baby Elizabeth when she was born at 5:03 p.m., Oct. 17, 1989.

She barely got to see her in those first, tumultuous 20 minutes.

After two sleepless nights, three days of on-again, off-again labor, the medical staff put a sheet in front of Marilyn's face when they made the final incision for an emergency C-section and pulled the baby out.

"They held her up and I got a chance to see her for a second, all wrapped up," Marilyn said. "I could see big,

huge, brown eyes looking around in amazement."

Exactly one minute later, at 5:04 p.m., the ground started to shake. During the next 15 seconds, much of downtown Santa Cruz would be turned into a pile of rubble by the Loma Prieta earthquake, lives would be lost, billions of dollars of damage done.

Today's remembrances

Both events will offer a moment of silence at 5:04 p.m.

■ McPherson Center for Art and History, Front and Cooper streets in Santa Cruz: 2-5:30 p.m.

■ Watsonville Community Hospital, 75 Nielson St.: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

In the small operating room at AMI Community Hospital, now part of Dominican Hospital, newborn Elizabeth seemingly stared wide-eyed at the walls, where a crack suddenly stretched from one side of the room to the other. Then everything turned black when the lights went out in the windowless room.

As soon as the shaking started, Jim Cupples, the baby's father, leaped across the room to the pediatrician who was examining the baby, Marilyn's first and only.

"Is this all there's going to be for this

Please see **BABY** — PAGE A8

Their faith remained unshaken

Disaster helped bring St. Patrick's parishioners closer together

By **TRINA KLEIST**
Sentinel staff writer

WATSONVILLE — For 125 years, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church stood like a sentinel at Watsonville's northern gateway, the spiritual home to four generations of Catholics who communed in a deep faith even though they were divided by many languages.

When the Loma Prieta earthquake shook St. Patrick's to its foundation, parishioners trembled as deeply. The rubble reflected their own lives, and they prayed to God to renovate their spirits. When the church was rebuilt in 1994, they felt resurrected, too.

Marking the tremor's anniversary today with a celebration beginning at 3 p.m. in the church parking lot, parishioners will burn the mortgage of the \$4.3 million debt they took on to pay for the renovation. That, too, is a liberation as much spiritual as temporal.

"Free at last!" cried former Mayor Ann Soldo, a lifelong member and part of the initial effort to rebuild.

"It shows their faith and commitment to build and pay for (the church) again," said Monsignor D. Declan Murphy, a priest at St. Patrick's for 17 years and now vicar general of the Monterey Diocese. "It was quite a big project, but Watsonville people were always known for

their generosity."

Like a ruined man who rebuilds his life, the church from the outside looks like its 1903 English Gothic original. But structurally, it is reinforced with steel and a new sense of divine priorities.

"If an angel had come and said, 'The church will be rebuilt in a day and it will all be free,' I'd have said, 'Yeah!'" said the Rev. Michael Miller, 53. He arrived nine months before the disaster and guided the congregation through reconstruction.

Despite the anguish, Miller, now at Sacred Heart in Salinas, feels thankful for

Please see **ST. PATRICK'S** — BACK PAGE

Parishioners leave Mass last week at St. Patrick's, in contrast to the wrecked and deserted church in 1989.

Don Coyro/Sentinel photos

