

The Quake of '89

10,000 people homeless

Three aftershocks hit Santa Cruz hardest

QUAKE, from Page 1Q
forecast for the Bay Area, and if unsettled weather materializes, that will make it tougher for the homeless.

By today, most damage after what's now been dubbed the Loma Prieta California Earthquake had been assessed in most places. And though the devastating litany has now become familiar — 275 people dead, billions of dollars in property damage and the ultimate horror along the collapsed section of Interstate 880 in Oakland still to be discovered — today seemed to mark a change in focus. While the damage is steep, and full recovery remains many months away, it was clear the region was starting

to claw its way back.

In Watsonville, power and water were back and buses were running, although downtown remained cordoned off.

As expected, more businesses were reopening, and traffic on area roadways was building. Volume was only a third of normal Wednesday, and though it remained below normal today, it was up significantly, the California Highway Patrol in San Jose reported today.

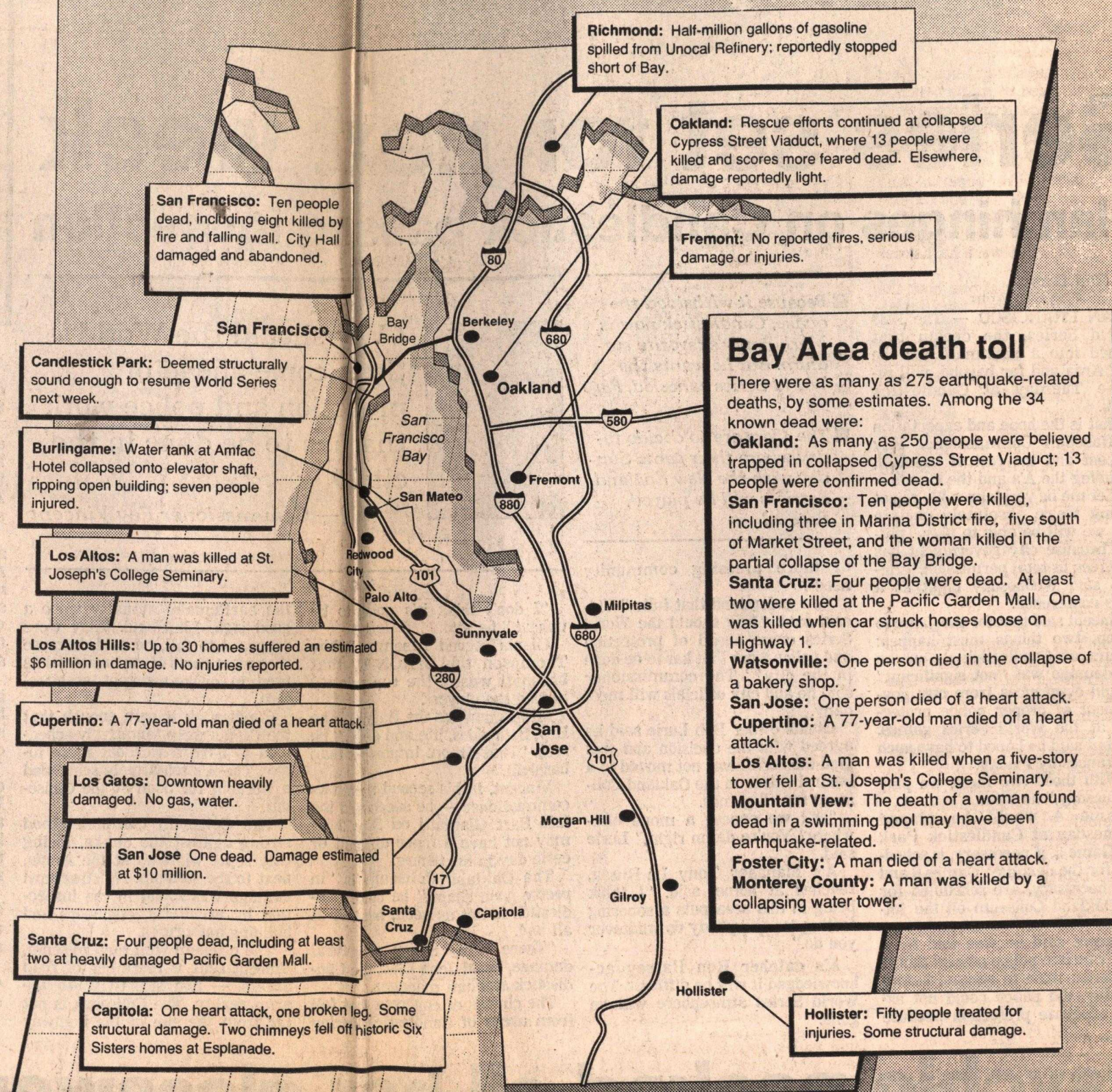
In the North Bay and East Bay, there were signs of what will happen as commuters grope for new routes to work after the Bay Bridge and parts of I-880 were crippled.

Traffic was backed up for miles heading south on I-880 through Oakland and Hayward as motorists tried to filter onto the San Mateo Bridge to get across the bay. And a spokesman for the Golden Gate Bridge said the on-ramp to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from southbound Highway 101 was closed because of bumper-to-bumper traffic on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge heading for southbound Highway 101.

In San Francisco, the downtown showed signs of returning to normal today. Skyscraper offices had electricity and BART trains — that will assume critical new importance with loss of the Bay Bridge and its Nimitz Freeway ap-

Where the walls came down

A city-by-city look at death and damage in the Bay Area



No one knows how many died

Mercury News Staff Report

The local and national media have published and broadcast wildly varying accounts of the number of victims in Tuesday's quake. Often, those numbers have been presented with the ring of

ten, those numbers have been presented with the ring of authority.

The simple truth is that, at this point in the recovery and rescue work, no completely reliable figures are available.

Most of the confusion has surrounded the number of people killed in the collapse of a section of Interstate 880 in Oakland. Since the earthquake and throughout the day Wednesday, state and local agencies issued contradictory death totals as they struggled to get through the bridgework to the bodies trapped in their vehicles.

The state Office of Emergency Services said as many as 250 people were trapped in the wreckage. That figure was based on Caltrans estimates of the traffic moving at the time of the quake.

Yet Alameda County officials called that figure speculation. They estimated the death toll at 50 to 100.

There is no explanation for the discrepancy in the figures issued by the two agencies.

electricity and... that will assume critical new importance with loss of the Bay Bridge and its Nimitz Freeway approach — rolled underneath the city.

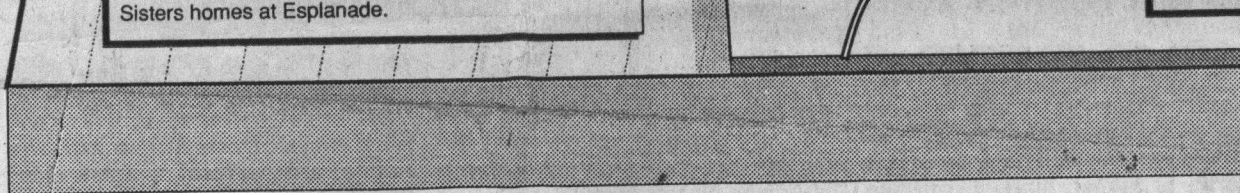
Meanwhile, many of the traditional sounds of city life — the whistles of hotel door attendants in search of taxis, honks of irate motorists and the bark of newspaper vendors — were evident as well.

"It's fantastic," said Sean Kendall of Fremont, a BART rider who is a personal computer maintenance worker in the city. "I can't believe how quickly the big buildings have recovered. It's a testament to what we've learned about earthquakes in the last 15 years."

While Kendall said he recognized many of the regulars on his BART train into San Francisco, there were amateurs evident as well — those motorists who can no longer take I-880, the Bay Bridge or other routes to work.

"You have to do what you have to do," said Helen Swee of San Francisco, a new BART rider. "I'm willing to do it, but I'm not used to it."

Electric service was expected to be restored by midnight for most people thrown into darkness, power



er company officials predicted today.

But as encouraging as today's developments were, the reality of Tuesday's quake — as powerful, as 2,000 kilotons of TNT and releasing the energy of one million power plants — continued to bore into the Bay Area's collective consciousness.

At a minimum, it became clear that for hundreds of thousands of residents, life won't be the same — at least for months, perhaps not ever again.

The grim picture was this:

✓ As many as 275 deaths, according to some officials. Of that total, the state Office of Emergency Services said about 250 died in the collapse of Interstate 880's Cypress Street Viaduct in Oakland. But there were conflicting numbers — the Alameda County Office

of Emergency Services said between 50 and 100 died on the viaduct.

So far, only 13 bodies have been pulled from the wreckage, where cars were flattened to inches. Rescue crews Wednesday counted 200 cars still sandwiched between the roads.

✓ Elsewhere, 21 other people known dead elsewhere in the region — 10 in San Francisco, five in Santa Cruz County, four in Santa Clara County, one in San Mateo County, and one in Monterey County.

✓ Area hospitals jammed by thousands of patients with minor, moderate and serious injuries. Of those, at least 250 were admitted.

✓ Early damage estimates of \$2 billion in San Francisco, hundreds of millions of dollars in Oakland, \$250 million in Santa Cruz

County, and up to \$50 million in Santa Clara County.

✓ Insurance experts predict Bay Area premiums will rise as a result of the nation's second deadliest quake. Nearly 80 percent of area homeowners do not have earthquake insurance, and damage to the uninsured could be astronomical.

✓ Blocks of city streets smashed to rubble or raked by fires in San Francisco, Santa Cruz and Los Gatos. Sixty buildings in San Francisco's Marina District will likely be torn down, left unsafe after the quake; the same fate awaits 40 buildings in downtown Santa Cruz.

✓ Months of traffic nightmares. Vital arteries and bridges remain closed as work crews scramble to assess the damage. The Bay Bridge could be closed for three weeks; I-880 could take up to 18 months to repair, and the stretch

Source: Mercury News reports

Ron Coddington — Mercury News

of Highway 17 between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz could stay closed for three weeks.

President Bush declared the Bay Area a disaster area, and announced he would visit on Friday.

State officials began planning for the future, looking for the billions of dollars it will take to rebuild the area. California Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, D-San Francisco, and state Sen. John Garamendi, D-Stockton, announced that the state Office of Emergency Services has \$100 million ready to spend.

Lawmakers also said the Legislature may need to return to Sacramento two months earlier than planned to consider a temporary tax increase — possibly through a gas or sales tax — to raise more money.

The World Series was not forgotten, as major league baseball officials announced they hoped to play remaining games in San Francisco and Oakland. But Tuesday would be the soonest play would resume, and perhaps not even then — only if holding the games was deemed "appropriate," baseball commissioner Fay Vincent.

"We know our place," he said.