

Baby's birth greeted with a rumble

By MARK BERGSTROM

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SANTA CRUZ — Whether Elizabeth Patrice Cupples makes her mark in life is something that only time will tell. But she definitely made her entrance into the world known Oct. 17.

The 7-pound, 14-ounce girl's birth certificate shows her time of birth at 5:03 p.m.

Doctors had just delivered the baby by Cesarean section when the operating room at Community Hospital began to shake violently.

At 5:04 the little girl was whisked to the nursery while doctors fought to stay on their feet to protect the mother, Marilyn Cupples, and close her incision.

Cupples, 40, was awake, but was numb from the waist down. She was probably the only person in the county who didn't think about running.

Cupples said she gaped at a crack which grew larger and larger on one of the walls. Then she saw a huge operating light above her pitch menacingly.

"I just thought, 'Oh, God, is it going to come down?'" she said.

"My baby was out and it was breathing — I knew that — so I just said to myself we'll just wait for this thing to stop and then they'll sew me up," she said.

"The doctors weren't thinking quite the same thing, I'm sure," she said.

Anesthesiologist Dr. Bruce Hindrichs tried to brace the operating table which was moving from the force of the 6.9 quake.

Doctors Katherine Corby and Marsha Muir shielded

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— Marilyn Cupples

Cupples from flying debris so she wouldn't be contaminated before they could get her sutured.

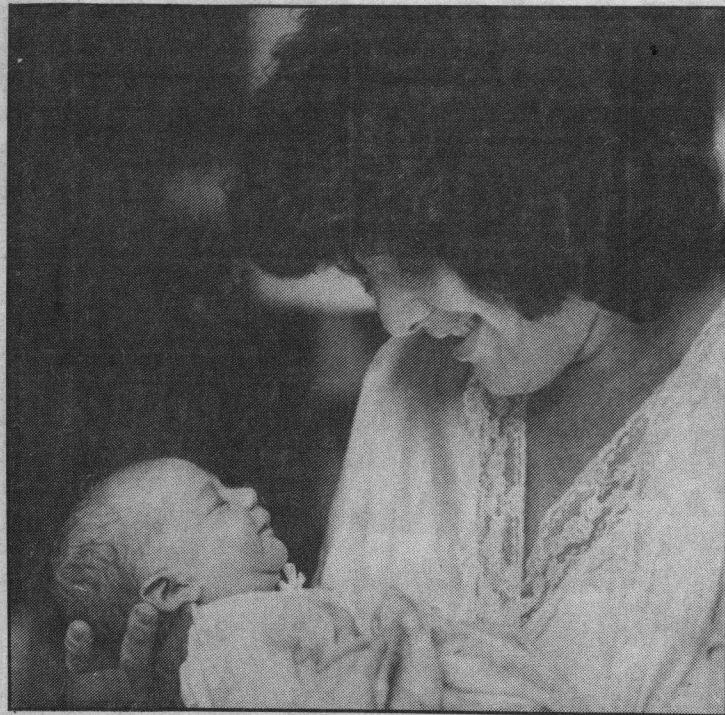
Afterward, she said, Muir rushed over to Dominican Hospital to assist a woman who went into labor. Corby ran to the emergency room to help out, and Hindrichs was paged to prepare for the first of the earthquake victims.

Elizabeth Patrice is the first baby for Marilyn and Jim Cupples of Santa Cruz. Mom is a self-employed personnel consultant and dad is an engineer.

They thought everything was normal when Marilyn was admitted in labor Monday night.

But by late Tuesday afternoon, after alternatives had not worked, the decision was made for a Cesarean delivery.

Is her daughter destined for something special? "I have a feeling that's so. At any rate, she definitely let her entrance be known," says Marilyn Cupples.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Marilyn Cupples' daughter, Elizabeth, was born with a shake.