

LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE  
15 YEARS LATER

# Back to the epicenter



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Local historian Sandy Lyon leads a group back to the epicenter of 1989's Loma Prieta earthquake.

*Earthquake - Ten years later*

*10-18-04*



Cabrillo College geologist Dave Schwartz explains earthquake mechanics Sunday.

## Residents, experts mark the spot at Forest of Nisene Marks State Park

By **DONNA JONES**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

APTOS — At 5:04 p.m. Sunday, heavy drizzle fell in the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park as about 50 people gathered in the redwoods to mark the 15th anniversary of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake with a moment of silence.

The brief ceremony was the culmination of a day that evoked emotions along with memories of the magnitude-7.1 quake that left 62 people dead, including six in Santa Cruz County.

### More Inside

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**BACK PAGE**

"I wanted to pay tribute to what happened ... to reflect on the magnitude of what happened," said Sharon Choy of Aptos.

See **EPICENTER** on **BACK PAGE**





Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Geologist Gary Griggs says it is difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the Loma Prieta earthquake's epicenter.

## Epicenter

Continued from Page A1

Minutes earlier, UC geologist Gary Griggs had scratched an "X" on the ground with the tip of his boot to mark the epicenter, the spot directly above the quake's focal point 11 miles under the surface. Then he admitted scientists can only pinpoint the quake's epicenter within a 2- or 3-mile range.

"Everyone wants to see a hole, a crater, a crevasse," Griggs said. "It doesn't work like that."

The event was organized by residents of Redwood Drive in Aptos. The rural neighborhood sits adjacent to the state park and is one of the first in the county to establish a Community

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UC GEOLOGIST GARY GRIGGS

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Emergency Response Team. About 30 residents are members of the team, having completed a 22-hour training course covering everything from planning ahead to first-aid and rescue.

Local historian Sandy Lydon, the leader of the Redwood Drive team, recalled how neighbors across the county came together to help each other after the quake. He urged participants to "reach back 15 years and try to capture that closeness and keep it alive" by establishing emergency

response teams in their own neighborhoods.

The plan was to spend the day in the woods, but weather forced organizers to move most of the event to a Cabrillo College classroom. There, participants listened to presentations on geology and watched videos of 1989 news coverage.

In the darkened room, the sounds of sighs and gasps gave evidence of the emotional power brought on by images of the rubble-strewn downtowns of Santa Cruz and Watsonville flickering across the television screen.

"It brought out the whole picture," said Ann Stanislawsky of Santa Cruz. "I can see it in my head."

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