

Earthquake 10 yrs later

Sunday, October 17, 1999

Aftershocks of the Loma Prieta earthquake reverberate today

Ten years after





Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

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.

