

Emotions ran high that day

By TOM LONG
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Marilyn Brister had just finished straightening up the Pacific Garden Mall boutique where she worked when the building around her began to shake last Oct. 17.

"I had just gotten the whole store cleaned for inventory and it was perfect," said Brister.

Not for long. As the clock hit 5:04, displays fell apart, mirrors cracked and fell, the entire building seemed to be crumbling.

"All I heard was these bricks falling," said Brister. "All the windows shot out as I tried to get out of the store. There was glass all over."

Brister rode out the quake inside the store, Revelations, then ran out when the shaking stopped. That's when she realized that Robert's Leathers, the store next to Revelations, had caved in, and Lily Marlene's, a few doors down, was nothing more than a pile of rubble.

"I was just really in shock," Brister said. "I hadn't cried yet." She stood in the street next to employees from Roberts who had raced out of the build-



Marilyn Brister
Hasn't forgotten quake

ing where — miraculously — no one had been hurt.

"We all just kind of hugged each other in shock. We stood in front of the stores for a long time," Brister said. "It felt like a bomb had gone off."

When aftershocks hit, Brister and her friends ran down the mall to get out of the way of the Palomar Hotel in case it fell. But after the earth stopped



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Brister finally cried when she left the mall that day.

shaking, they returned to stand in front of their wrecked stores.

After awhile, police came and told Brister she would have to leave the mall.

That's when she broke down. Sobbing, she and a friend walked arm-in-arm down Pacific Avenue, leaving the wreckage behind.

By the time Thanksgiving came, Brister and others who had worked at Revelations were

offered jobs at Changes, a store four doors down. She still works there.

"I really felt like I wanted to go back downtown and be a part of it coming together," Brister said.

But Brister will never completely leave Oct. 17 behind.

"I'll always remember the quake and being in that store all by myself," she said. "I did not handle it calmly."