

The big quake rattles Guilford

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Features Editor

At about 10:30 on the morning of Monday January 17th, Jonah Krakow was awakened by a phone call. On the other end of the phone was a friend of his in Chicago.

The caller informed Jonah, a first-year student at Guilford College, that there had been an earthquake in California earlier that morning, but gave no other details.

This news, however, didn't bother Jonah. He had grown up in southern California and he had experienced his share of earthquakes, minor rumbles that served more as a nuisance than a threat. So Jonah went back to sleep.

He re-awoke about half an hour later, showered, and proceeded to the first-floor lounge of Binford Hall to see if anyone had heard

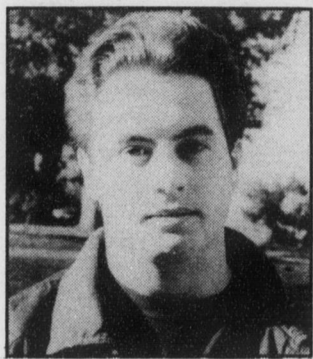


Photo by Krista Mitschele

Krakow

anything about the quake. Once there, he discovered that not only was the earthquake more severe than he imagined (it registered 6.6 on the Richter Scale), but the epicenter of the quake was in Northridge, about 10 to 15 minutes north of his home in North Hollywood.

Jonah hurried to his room to call

home, but, surprise to no one, he couldn't get through. The telephone lines were down, as is common whenever there is an earthquake.

So the day passed with Jonah watching the bizarre goings-on in California: the collapsed Santa Monica Freeway, the seemingly always jammed roadway that he had traveled quite often, the flooded set of TV's *General Hospital*, where he had once visited, and the three-story (now two-story) apartment complex that resembled the place where his grandparents reside.

Tuesday came and Jonah still couldn't get through to his family. His friend at school in Chicago had said she had finally reached her parents early that morning, but there was no sign of Jonah's mother and 16 year-old brother.

Now he began to worry. While

everyone else at Guilford was trying to stay warm during the Triad's blistering cold spell, Jonah was trying to stay cool during the parade of busy signals he kept receiving when he'd try to call home. With the passing of each aftershock, Jonah could feel himself becoming more tense and more upset that the phone lines to his house were still down.

Finally, at about 5:00 Wednesday afternoon, Jonah got through to his mother.

"It woke me up and I was walking and plaster was falling on my head," Jonah's mother said, "I thought it was the big one."

His mother went on to explain that while she had no water, Jonah's grandparents did. So she went there and got water and brought it back to the house. The phones came back up shortly before Jonah reached her, almost 58

hours after the earthquake occurred. "Which was far to long to wait," Jonah exclaimed.

Jonah's house suffered little damage. Cracks in the roof and walls were just about the extent of the structural damage to the house. As far as everything else, "A few bowls broke, as well as some plates and sculptures that were on display," Jonah said. "But there was nothing really valuable lost."

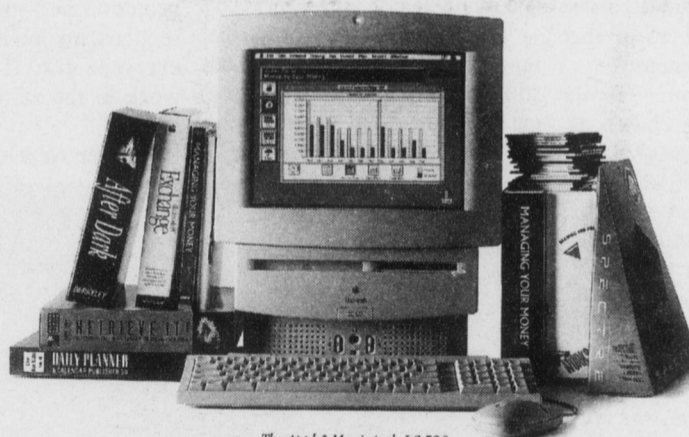
So while many of the people in southern California now have to wait to be housed while the overall damage is assessed, Jonah can live a little easier. His family and his home, while not perfect, are fine and doing well.

"This was, by far, the closest it's ever been to us in my lifetime," Jonah said. "They had that big one in San Francisco a few years back, but this was the first time that it really 'hit home,' as they say."

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