

Speculation varies from coast to coast concerning California's plunge into the sea

Campus Calendar

by John Dvorak
Nebraskan Staff Writer

Would it be better for the world if California did indeed sink into the Pacific Ocean?

The experts, like Dr. Robert B. Nelson, assistant professor of geology at NU, will not comment on that question. But Nelson, a structural geologist, would comment on the predictions currently running rampant on the West Coast that California, following a devastating earthquake, will fall into the sea.

"That would be, in geologic terms, a 'catastrophy,'" he said. "Throughout geologic history, there is no real evidence of any such catastrophe."

The center of attention seems to be the San Andreas fault, a fracture in the earth's crust which runs nearly the length of California. It passes west of San Francisco and east of Los Angeles. Lesser known faults have developed near the San Andreas.

"Sometimes the fault has not moved for long periods of time," Nelson explained. Other times, such as during the great San Francisco earthquake in 1906, the fault moved 20 feet.

The fault has been studied for only about 75 years, not much time in geologic perspective. According to documented figures, Nelson said, the fault has moved about 40 inches a century or less than an inch a year.

The San Andreas will have to move a lot more than that if the predictions of soothsayers, hippies, cultists, astrologers, ministers and other seers are to come true.

About a dozen dates in April have been offered for the quake; the next is Friday, April 18, which is the anniversary of the 1906 quake. Bo Maverick, the self appointed mayor of Haight-Ashbury, says that the earthquake will begin April 19 at 8:19 p.m. Another more far-reaching prediction states that the giant earthquake will occur at 3:13 p.m. some Friday from May through December.

The most popular single date for the quake was the afternoon of April 4. Obviously it didn't happen.

It is impossible to predict an earthquake down to the minute, Nelson explained. But a recent theory can make it possible to pinpoint a future earthquake sometime in a period of tens of years.

When strain builds up to a certain point on a fault, Nelson said, an earthquake results. Strain gages are placed on the fault, thus measuring the energy being built up.

Some people blame the current fears of a gigantic catastrophe on scientists who say that California is already overdue for a major earthquake, Nelson concurred. Some segments of the San Andreas fault have reached their theoretical limit, he said.

No one knows for sure when the rumors began. Possibly Mrs. Elizabeth Steen, a 29-year-old seeress who left San Francisco last November, started the rumors. She achieved fame by allegedly predicting the death of Dr. Martin L. King and the gall bladder surgery performed on former President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Scientists often face such predictions, Nelson said. In fact, catastrophes were once said to be the cause of the earth's deformation. A theory has been advanced in the

past which said that the Pacific Ocean was formed by a meteor striking the earth.

"The more we study geology, the more less likely it appears that catastrophes have played a part in the earth's formation," Nelson said.

Despite the almost nil chances of California sliding into the ocean, predictions of a catastrophe have caused havoc throughout California and the West Coast.

Randy Hall, a former NU graduate student who now resides on the coast said recently in a letter, "This is supposed to be the big month around here; the papers are full of earthquake news. . . . So far several hundred people have left the state — it's really something to see fear and ignorance at work."

Several congregations of the Friendly Bible Apostolic Church of California left for Tennessee and Mississippi. Cordons of hippies left for northern Mexico. Eleven members of the Fellows of the Ancient Mind, a psychic cult, showed up at the Los Angeles City Hall last month to obtain a salvage permit that would allow them to rebuild the city after the quake.

Predictions of doom are nothing new, Dr. John A. Braeman, associate professor of history, remarked. One of the most well known was in 1844. William Miller predicted that the world would end on October 22, 1844. He and a large group of followers wrapped themselves in white sheets and waited on a hill for the end, which of course never came.

Instances of dire predictions have occurred earlier in history also, Braeman said. Perhaps, when the year 2000 arrives, more predictions about the end of the world will be advanced.

It is doubtful that any previous prediction has resulted in such an economic windfall as have the latest West Coast rumors.

Posters depicting Los Angeles falling into the ocean are selling for \$2.56. Author Curt Gentry, who penned the book "The Last Days of the Late Great State of California," has appeared on national television and his book is famous on the coast. However, bookdealers in Lincoln do not stock the book yet. One bookdealer said he didn't even know of the book's existence.

Two songs have been recorded about the end of California. One is sung by Mama Cass, said a department store spokesman in Lincoln. But he couldn't even give the names of the two records. He did say that there



is almost no demand for the records. A Lincoln pop radio station spokesman said she had never heard of the songs.

Although the songs and book are not known here, many Lincolinites are talking about the predictions. Out in California, there they are doing more than talking. Lessons in earthquake survival are being given in elementary schools.

In the words of one song: "Day after day, people come to L.A. Sh-Sh- don't you tell 'em The whole place is shaking away . . ."

- WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16
(All events in the Nebraska Union unless otherwise indicated.)
- 2:30 p.m. Union Music Committee
 - 3 p.m. Arts & Sciences "Lynn White"
 - 3:30 p.m. Union Hospitality
Union Talks & Topics
Builders — College Days & Tours
Quiz Bowl — Questions Committee
Union Trips & Tours
 - 4 p.m. ASUN Senate
 - 4:30 p.m. Seminar On The Disadvantaged Child
Free University — Money & Banking
AWS — Congress
YWCA — Tutorial Committee
Miss U. of N. Finalists
 - 5:30 p.m. Toastmasters
 - 6 p.m. A S C E
 - 6:16 p.m. Phi Beta Kappa — Sigma Xi banquet
 - 6:30 p.m. Builders — Workers Council
Phi Chi Theta
 - 7 p.m. University of Nebraska Rodeo Assoc., East Campus Union
Red Cross
Builders
IFC
Alpha Lambda Delta
Alpha Kappa Psi
 - 7:10 p.m. NU VET, room 110, Ag Hall
 - 7:30 p.m. Math Counselors
Student Veterans Organization, elections at Legion Club
RAM — Rehearsal
 - 8 p.m. Kosmet Klub, slides from Camelot
 - 9 p.m. Mortar Board
 - 9:30 p.m. Fellowship of Christian Athletes
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