

Mountain buries California homes

LA CONCHITA, Calif. — Inch by inch, menacing fissures opened on a waterlogged bluff above this tiny beach town. Then the mountain really went on the move, burying nine homes and forcing 200 people to flee a vast wall of ooze.

The land had been slipping toward the sea for 23,000 years and La Conchita's 700 residents knew for six months that cracks on the steep slope were widening, aggravated by heavy rain.

Disaster finally struck Saturday, when tons of soggy earth slipped into the town north of Los Angeles and spread across an area 1,000 feet wide. Authorities stood guard above the hillside Monday, ready to alert residents if the earth moves again.

"A lot of people in La Conchita have faith, but look at that mountain ... We're dealing with the unknown."

ALAN CAMPBELL

Ventura County fire spokesman

"Their future is about as uncertain as this mountain," said Alan Campbell, a Ventura County fire spokesman. "The gods are not talking directly to anybody. We just don't know what will happen."

More rain was expected by Wednesday. As rain let up Monday, trains usually allowed to roar through town at 65 mph were slowed to 20 mph to soften vibrations that could trigger another slide.

According to geologists, only 10 percent of the unstable earth that could come down did so on Saturday, sheriff's Sgt. Chuck Buttell said. Residents were told another massive slide was imminent.

"A lot of people in La Conchita have faith, but look at that moun-



tain," Campbell said. "This is the hardest part. We're dealing with the unknown."

While geologists surveyed craters of water formed in the mass left over from the weekend disaster, residents walked dogs, fetched belongings and went to work or school.

"They told us the whole mountain was going to come down," said Shirley DeFazio, who was moving a few personal items out of her house in the path of the slide.

"What more damage could it do?" asked Norma Watkins, whose mobile home was about 500 feet from the slide.

Pat Roderick was unhappy the sheriff's deputies who descended on the small town south of Santa Barbara weren't doing anything to haul the dirt away.

"Look at the money, our money, taxpayer money, being wasted," he said. "We've got guys standing around here with pistols. What are they going to do if it starts sliding, shoot it?"

Some residents also accused nearby La Conchita Ranch of over-irrigating its avocado groves, saying the water soaked the hillside and weakened it. Ranch operator David Orr declined to comment.

Buttell said the hill's slide is a fact of nature.

Americans are stressed, struggling to stay healthy

WASHINGTON — Two-thirds of Americans say they feel stressed out at least once a week, part of an increasingly difficult struggle many people have to lead a healthful life in the hectic modern world.

About 65 percent of Americans do the right things for good health, according to an annual ranking released Monday by Prevention health magazine. Last year's ranking was 66.8 percent.

Many Americans listed problems controlling their weight, finding time to exercise and sleeping more than six hours a night. And while seat belt use is high, fewer Americans are obeying speed limits.

Tom Dybdahl, director of the index, said Americans' behavior changes most dramatically when they can focus on a single, relatively easy act such as wearing auto safety belts or installing a smoke detector.

It is more of a challenge, he said, to persuade busy people to exercise regularly and eat more broccoli.

"Viewed over the past decade, living healthfully is neither a rapidly growing trend nor a disappearing phenomenon," Dybdahl said. "Rather, it is a complex and ongoing struggle, with progress in one area often accompanied by decline in another."

Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., who chairs the Senate Labor and

Human Resources Committee, said at a news conference with the magazine's editors that the survey is important in focusing attention on areas of human health in need of vast improvement.

She said government should not always try to impose regulations to force behavioral changes. "There are those areas where, through peer pressure and emotional impact, we tend to respond," Kassebaum said. "I think there is a limited role for government."

A survey last November of 1,262 adults on 21 healthful practices produced an overall score of 65.6 on a scale of 1 to 100, down slightly from last year's 66.8 and the lowest since 1989.

The index weighs such behavior as smoking, drinking, diet, exercise and weight control as well as frequency of medical exams, auto and home safety and sleep habits.

Nearly three-quarters of adults said they always wear a seat belt in the front seat of a car. Only 44 percent said they always observe speed limits.

Eighty-five percent avoid driving after drinking, but heavy drinkers are most likely to get behind the wheel, a report on the survey said. Overall, 60 percent said they drink alcohol at least sometimes.

Poverty conference addresses poor nations wanting more aid

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — An international poverty conference opened Monday with poor nations pressing for more aid and the U.N. chief warning that the meeting could run aground on indifference.

"The problem of the United Nations is to cope with ... donor fatigue, conference fatigue," said U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

"Fatigue will provide something more dangerous, which is indifference," he said. "Our goal is to show ... we are all of the same community. We must help each other."

Western diplomats in pinstripes, Africans in adire robes and Arab delegates in keffiyeh headaddresses mingled in the central hall at the sprawling convention center.

On bulletin boards hung hundreds of drawings, paintings and poems by children — most from developing countries — expressing their visions of poverty and starvation.

In an emerging standoff between wealthy and poor countries, delegates at the 183-nation meeting argued behind closed doors over setting up a fund to help eradicate poverty.

A proposal for "new and additional" aid to poor nations is among the most contentious — and one U.S. delegates said privately they

would not accept. But a caucus of more than 130 developing countries indicated that it would fight for the aid.

"We enjoin creditor nations and multinational financial institutions to take more meaningful steps toward debt reduction," said the caucus leader, Cielito F. Habito of the Philippines.

The stalemate did not bode well for any agreement on action in the summit's final document, to be signed March 12 by nearly 120 leaders, including German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

The United Nations said success at the poverty summit should be measured in the convergence of ideas, rather than hard commitments, as it tried to justify the assembly's \$28 million cost.

Boutros-Ghali said 1.3 billion people — more than one in four — live in poverty and 1.5 billion do not have access to basic health care.

But the summit was tinged with an air of futility, compounded by the absence of key leaders, notably President Clinton.

Among the debates, the message from the United Nations and wealthy countries was that poorer nations must take care of themselves.

U.N. summit on world poverty

Delegates from 160 countries are attending a summit in Copenhagen to develop plans to:

- Eradicate unemployment
- Attack poverty
- Alleviate social inequalities

1994 total global population
5.3 billion people

Global workforce:
2.8 billion
(people capable of working)

Global workforce

120 million unemployed
1.98 billion working
700 million underemployed
(Working at tasks that do not allow them to make ends meet)



• One in five people in the world live on just \$1 a day.

• Forty-seven children are born into poverty every minute.

• More than two-thirds of the world's poor are women.



Source: United Nations

AP

News... in a Minute

Gingrich's sister lobbies Congress

WASHINGTON — Newt Gingrich's lesbian half-sister joined dozens of gay activists lobbying Congress Monday for money to fight AIDS and for legal protection against discrimination. She said the agenda of her brother's party had pushed her into greater activism.

"The Republicans being in control means that some of the support that we've been used to with the Democrats isn't there anymore," said Candace Gingrich. "So it's kind of time for all of us to renew our commitment to the things that we find important."

Ms. Gingrich, 28, of Harrisburg, Pa., was invited to join the lobbying effort of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the nation's largest gay and lesbian political group.

Asked repeatedly by reporters if she felt her brother was anti-gay, Ms. Gingrich said no.

"He's just maybe uninformed," she said. "Maybe he hasn't had people from both sides giving him information."

Gingrich told reporters he believes "AIDS research is very important" though not more important than research on heart attacks, breast cancer or other forms of cancer that might affect children.

'Lion King' video sets sales record

BURBANK, Calif. — Shoppers snapped up a record 20 million copies of "The Lion King" video in its first week on sale, the Walt Disney Co. said Monday.

Only a handful of movies, including Disney's "Aladdin," "Snow White" and "Beauty and the Beast," have sold more than 20 million copies.

"It's not just families and kids buying it, there are a huge number of adults picking it up for themselves," said Ann Daly, Disney's home video chief.

The record comes with the movie still playing in some theaters. It yielded North American retail sales of \$350 million in just a week. The previous record holder, "Aladdin," sold 10.6 million copies in its first week in stores, Disney said.

Disney expects to sell 27 million cassettes of the animated musical and has stepped up duplication to meet the demand.

500 protesters stop Gingrich's plans to speak

WASHINGTON — A ballroom full of county officials was awaiting Newt Gingrich's arrival Monday when the kitchen doors burst open to reveal not dessert but about 500 protesters waving empty lunch trays and chanting, "No more cuts."

The demonstrators, many carrying small children, dodged waiters as they took over the head table and jammed the aisles, protesting reductions in the school lunch program.

"Don't take the food out of the children's mouths," said Maxine Nelson of Pine Bluff, Ark., who, like the others, belongs to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or ACORN.

Faced with the raucous protest, luncheon organizers from the National Association of Counties abandoned plans for speeches by Gingrich and others before the 2,000 county officials. The demonstrators cheered the decision.

District police officials said there were no arrests.

Last week, House Republicans advanced a proposal to replace the federally mandated school lunch program with a state-administered system funded by federal block grants. Opponents said it could lead to cuts in free and subsidized school lunches to the poor.

The demonstrators at the Washington Hilton Hotel were "just tragically misinformed," Gingrich later told reporters. ... They broke into the meeting and had bullhorns, and their idea of a dialog was to chant with bullhorns," he said.

"This only makes me less supportive of their cause," said Shirley Greene, county commission chairwoman from Latah County, Idaho. "... It's about time people figured out they have to do something for themselves rather than have their hand out to the government."

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