

EARTHQUAKE

Continued from Page 1

friends that attend California State University at Northridge that she hasn't been able to reach on the telephone. An apartment complex that houses mostly Northridge college students collapsed after the earthquake, killing several people.

Amezquita's roommate Sarah Caplan, a University freshman, is from a town just ten miles from Northridge. Her aunt lives in Northridge, and her grandmother lives in a the neighboring town of Reseda.

Caplan was in Colorado when she heard about the earthquake. The only person she could reach by phone was her mother, but she was disconnected halfway through their conversation. On her plane ride from Colorado to Eugene, Caplan anxiously worried about her relatives.

"I was very scared for them," Caplan said. "Earthquakes really scare me."

Caplan said her family is fine — they

just have to buy a new TV — but her aunt's apartment building was condemned because of structural damage. The walls of the building collapsed and its foundation tilted.

"I feel really bad that my aunt has to find a new place to live," she said.

University sophomore Sean Coen said he has family members living in Burbank, about ten minutes from Northridge. The earthquake was so strong it knocked family members off their feet, he said

Coen's family survived the earthquake with just a few broken dishes and crooked picture frames. But his dad works as a judge in a San Fernando Valley courthouse that was damaged extensively. Coen said his dad still got up for work Tuesday morning, but didn't know if the building was safe.

Coen said LA is going to be a mess for a long period of time because of the collapse of two main freeways. Thousands of people relied on those freeways for their

daily commute, he said.

"I'm wondering how my mom is going to get to work," said Steven Lopez, a University student from East Los Angeles.

Lopez said he was pretty shaken after hearing about the earthquake. His family lives about 30 miles from Northridge, and his girlfriend is a student at University of Southern California.

"It hit me pretty hard," he said.

Lopez was able to talk to his family early Monday, but couldn't reach his girlfriend until that evening. Although everyone was OK, Lopez said the effects of an earthquake stick with people for a long time.

In 1987, Lopez was caught in an earthquake that registered 6.1 on the Richter scale. He understands what people in LA are experiencing now, he said.

"You think that something like that could never happen," he said. "After an earthquake you're scared."

Jesse Margolis, a University student from Beverly Hills, said he was glad he wasn't at home during the earthquake, but he wishes he could be there to offer support to family members.

"It is scary when you're so far away and disaster happens," Margolis said.

Margolis said he was talking to his girlfriend in LA on the phone when a 5.5-magnitude aftershock hit. He heard his girlfriend panic during the temblor and tried to comfort her over the phone, he said.

Monday's earthquake was not the "big quake" predicted by geologists, but LA has already seen more than its share of disasters. Last year's riots following the Rodney King trial and the costly fires a few months ago have sobered the LA community.

"LA is a pretty crazy place," Margolis said. "I think it will take something bigger than this for the city to collapse."

Oregon Daily Emerald

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