

EARTHWEEK: A DIARY OF THE PLANET

By Steve Newman

Earthquakes



Parts of California were rocked by scores of aftershocks of the disastrous temblor that heavily damaged portions of the San Francisco Bay Area on October 17, and of a quake that caused more than \$10 million in damage to areas east of Los Angeles on February 28. The 75 Bay Area aftershocks came on the anniversary of the catastrophic Great Earthquake of 1906 while several elderly survivors were celebrating the event in downtown San Francisco.

In northwestern China, two people were injured and several buildings cracked when a strong quake struck near the border with the Soviet Union. Minor damage was reported from a moderate quake that jolted the Pacific Northwest from southern British Columbia to Seattle.

Earth movements were also felt in eastern Indonesia, central Taiwan, near the Philippine capital of Manila, and in southern Indiana and Ohio.

Floods

■ Floods from a season of



Floods from a season of record rainfall in eastern Australia have isolated several cattle towns in the outback and disrupted rain and road transportation in two states. Police in northern New South Wales said thousands of sheep had died in the floods, and a Queensland Emergency Services spokesman announced that at least one third of that state is under water. Sydney has registered the highest rainfall total since records began there in 1859.

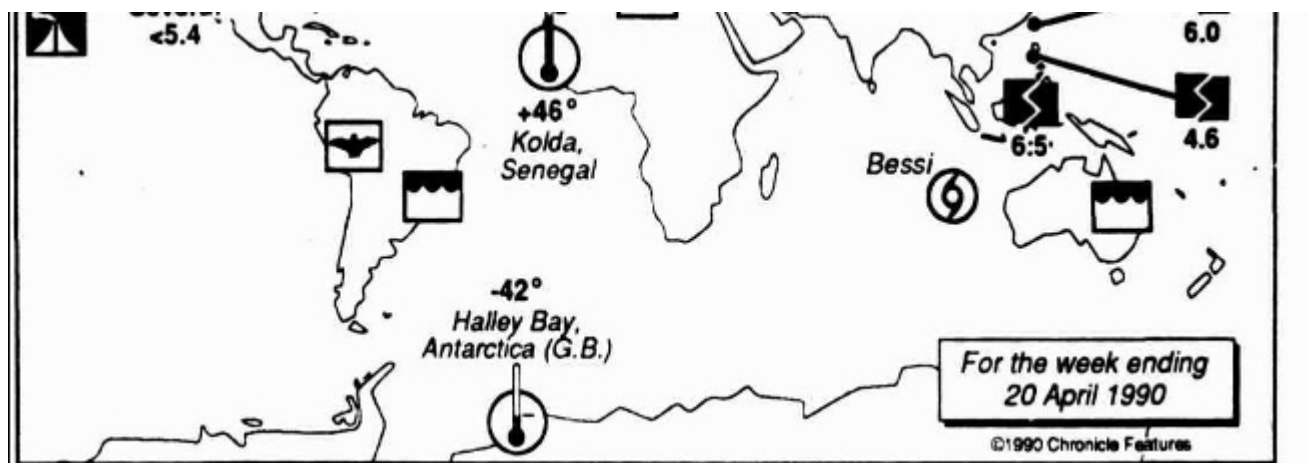
Heavy rains in Rio de Janeiro killed up to seven people, caused chaos throughout the city, and forced postponement of a long-awaited rock concert by Paul McCartney.

Tropical Storm



Tropical cyclone Bessi moved harmlessly over the open waters of the eastern Indian Ocean with maximum winds of 50 km-h.





UFO Fever



The appearance of unidentified flying objects in the U.S.S.R. has become so commonplace that the Soviet Press says it is getting tired of such reports. Still, Tass was intrigued by tales of a UFO that is said to have hovered above the ground while creating a cylindrical hole five metres deep, 100 mm wide and tilted at a 70 degree angle. Many residents in the village of Voronez reported seeing a huge fireball above the ground the night before the hole was discovered. The official Soviet news agency also said that regular flights by UFOs were detected by air defense units stationed around Pereslavl-Zaleski.

Lookout teams in Belgium spent the Easter weekend scanning the skies for UFOs at 20 vantage points. Ten scientists and observers flew in a plane to look for a silent, luminous low-flying triangle sighted regularly

low-flying triangle sighted regularly over the hills in the south of the country. They found nothing.

Volcanoes



Lava from Hawaii's Kilauea volcano destroyed two more homes and threatened 60 others, while a prediction of another eruption of Alaska's Redoubt volcano came true. Redoubt's blast sent an ash plume seven miles high, but winds carried it over sparsely-populated areas northwest of the mountain.

Killer Flies



The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization warned that a killer fly from Latin America is threatening Libya and could soon spread throughout Africa, southern Europe and the Middle East. The blue-green New World fly attacks people and livestock by laying eggs in the tiniest scratch or superficial skin lesions. The wounds often become gaping, and are sometimes fatal, as the larvae hatch and feed. The *Cochliomyia Hominovorax*, or man-eating

fly, can lay as many as 400 eggs in 15 minutes. It's believed to have

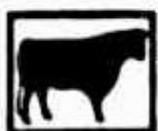
15 minutes. It's believed to have arrived in Libya from imported livestock.

Rabid Bats



At least 22 people died in the Peruvian Amazon province of Condorcanqui after being bitten by rabid bats. Health officials in the region suggested that people attacked by the bats should wash their wounds with soap and water, then go to the nearest medical post for immediate vaccination.

Flying Cow



A cow destined for a Turkish slaughter house leapt from a truck onto the roof of a car carrying a provincial governor, crushing it and injuring the occupants. The popular daily newspaper *Gunaydin* said the governor of Mugla province, his wife and driver, suffered only slight injuries. The car was a total loss.
