

Study links geyser eruption patterns to 3 major quakes

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
 WASHINGTON — A change in the eruption pattern of an "Old Faithful" type of geyser near Calistoga, Calif. may be a warning about impending large earthquakes, researchers say.
 In a study to be published Friday in the journal, Science, two Carnegie Institution researchers said the Old Faithful Geyser of California, located near Calistoga, experienced a sudden variation in its eruption pattern within one to

three days before three major earthquakes.
 Paul G. Silver and Nathalie J. Valette-Silver, a wife and husband team at Carnegie's Department of Terrestrial Magnetism in Washington, said a 20-year record of eruptions of the California geyser is clear evidence that it is affected by large quakes within 155 miles of the geyser site.
 "Either this is all a coincidence and nature is playing a practical joke" or the geyser is exhibiting changes that are precursors to large earth movements, Silver said

in a statement released by Carnegie.
 The researchers are out of the country and not reachable by telephone.
 In the Science report, the Silvers said they were visiting the Calistoga geyser in 1989 and waiting for it to erupt when Olga Kolbek, the co-manager of the attraction, revealed that records of the geyser eruptions had been maintained since 1971.
 The Silvers obtained copies of the records and entered thousands of eruption times into a

computer.
 They then compared eruption patterns for the most just preceding a major earthquake with periods that included earthquakes.
 The comparisons were based on the length of time, or interval, between eruptions.
 They found that three major earthquakes within 155 miles of the geyser occurred within one to three days after the geyser eruption pattern underwent abrupt and dramatic changes.

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