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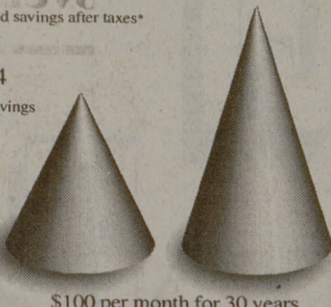
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California faults could produce bigger earthquake than expected

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Faults buried deep beneath the streets of California could produce larger earthquakes than previously thought, say researchers who studied India's recent 7.7-magnitude quake.

The type of fault that produced the deadly Jan. 26 quake — a blind-thrust fault — is also found in California, including at least one running directly beneath the skyscrapers of downtown Los Angeles.

A group that assesses the state's earthquake potential previously assumed Southern California's blind-thrust faults weren't capable of producing earthquakes greater than magnitude 7.3. But its members said Tuesday they are now questioning that ceiling after studying the India quake, which left more than 19,000 people dead.

The difference between the two measures is significant: A magnitude 7.7 earthquake releases about 2.5 times more energy than a 7.3 quake.

By comparison, the 1989 earthquake that killed 67 people and caused \$7 billion in damage in the San Francisco area registered 7.1.

The 1994 Northridge quake, linked

to a blind-thrust fault near Los Angeles, registered 6.7.

"It sort of raises the bar for what the maximum earthquake detection threshold is for blind-thrust faults," said William Lettis, an earthquake hazard consultant and member of the research team sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute. "As a geologist, can you go out and easily find a fault that will produce a future 7.7 earthquake? The answer is no, and that's an important lesson."

By definition, blind-thrust faults remain buried and do not break the surface of the ground, making them more difficult to map. The India earthquake ruptured at a depth of about 12 miles.

Preliminary findings from India suggests similarly large earthquakes could occur in areas of California where blind-thrust faults exist — and that those earthquakes could be much larger than anticipated.

"The question here is, could an earthquake like this happen in California? And if it could — and I am not saying it can — if it could, the fact that it did not break the surface could potentially be of great concern," said

Jonathan Stewart, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of California at San Diego.

Earthquakes along the San Andreas fault, which one side moves horizontally, which can destroy buildings and other structures. Quakes along strike-slip faults, such as the San Andreas, move horizontally.

Lettis cautioned that the findings are still studying the natural history of the New Madrid fault in Missouri, which is not a direct analog to the San Andreas. States to its tectonic setting may more closely resemble earthquakes in 1811 and the New Madrid fault in Missouri, which is not a direct analog to the San Andreas.

Regardless, the blind-thrust faults known to exist remain a mystery in California, said Thomas Healy, a professor of engineering at the California Institute of Technology. He is not affiliated with the study that studied the India earthquake.

"I don't think we realize what the largest earthquake could happen on a blind-thrust under Los Angeles," he said.

Scientists halt breast cancer spread in mice

(AP) — Scientists have figured out a key process by which breast cancer spreads to other organs, and they have successfully blocked it in mice.

"The literature is littered with cures for cancer that worked in animals but haven't translated to humans," said Jonathan Sedgwick, director of immunology at the DNAX Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif. "But this has the potential to influence how we might think about treating cancer in the future."

The DNAX researchers found that proteins that normally help guide infection-fighting white blood cells to their targets also play a key role in breast cancer's devastating spread.

They found that the proteins,

called chemokines, are released in large amounts by the lymph nodes, bone marrow, lungs and liver.

The chemokines then attract breast cancer cells circulating in the body. Those cells take root in the organs and form new tumors.

That explains why some organs become riddled with tumors in breast cancer patients, while other organs have few if any tumors, the researchers said.

The team, led by Albert Zlotnik and Anja Muller in collaboration with researchers at the National Cancer Institute in Mexico City, studied human breast cancer cells and tissue from human lungs, lymph nodes, bone marrow and liver.

They then took what they learned

and used an antibody to suppress interaction between chemokines and breast cancer tumor cells, which led into laboratory mice.

In mice treated with the antibody, the number of lung tumors was reduced 60 percent to zero, with some mice developing no tumors at all.

All of the mice in control groups that received an antibody developed lung tumors.

The DNAX institute is a division of pharmaceutical maker Schering-Plough Corp.'s research arm. The findings are "very exciting and can lead to additional discoveries," said Isaiah Fridler, chief of cancer biology at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Institute in Houston.

COMMUNITY

Continued from Page 5A

school sent a copy of the posts to the principle. We didn't hear from them again."

When people visiting the Bronze constantly harass or behave inappropriately, Gaston said, the members will trace the person's Internet service provider and attempt to have the person's Internet connection severed.

"Just like any community, this can be dangerous or uncomfortable too," she said. "In fact, sometimes it can feel even more dangerous because someone may seem to be invading even more so because he is doing it from the computer in your home."

"The people in the community take this seriously, mostly because they have seen [harassing behavior] really affect people."

So they use the law and the contract that people sign with their Internet service provider as protection.

There are times, however, when the definition of appropriate comes into question.

Gaston said that people often feel free to make questionable statements, saying that the right to free speech gives them the right to do so. Often, the statements are

controversially removed.

Differences between member's geographical areas also sometimes create conflict.

"Sometimes, what you can say in the United States you can't say in Germany," she said. "What you can say in Canada is sometimes not appropriate here."

"For example, the age of consent is different, and one will say something about someone else's dad and the father may end up calling the FBI."

Life after Buffy

Gaston said she does not see the community any time soon, even after the show ends.

"I expect a significant number of people to stay in contact many years from now," she said. "If Buffy has taught us anything, it is that you can put a social network together for a short period of time and people may gather about it until the end of time, and there is a strong group here."

As for this type of cyber community becoming popular as time goes on, Gaston said she foresees interactions becoming more common as more people use the Internet.

But there will never be another Buffy.

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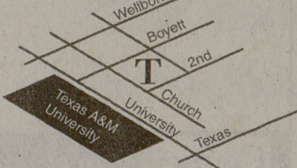
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