



Purple reign

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and advance to the NFC
title game against
the Atlanta Falcons

SPORTS

MONDAY

January 11, 1999

Slice of cheese

Emeryville gourmet food company
has found its niche

BUSINESS

Man of 'Action'

John Travolta talks
about his new film,
resurgent career
with Barry Caine

CUE



Just a
few clouds

High: 49
Low: 37

Details in
COFFEE BREAK

The Oakland Tribune

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SPORTS FINAL 50 CEI

Earthquake site online at Berkeley

By William Brand

STAFF WRITER

BERKELEY — If you live within the danger zone posed by the Hayward fault and wonder how this ever-threatening rift in the earth's surface is doing, the answer is as close as the nearest Internet connection.

Since the anniversary last April of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, a University of California, Berkeley, seismograph located on the Hayward fault has been online on the World Wide Web. So far, hundreds of thousands of individuals from around the world have logged on.

Don't expect a blah and boring picture of a needle scratching its way across a constantly moving roll of paper. This site, called "Memento Mori" has some serious weirdness.

"Memento mori" is Latin for "remember that you must die." In art history, it was a style of painting popular in 16th century Europe. Such paintings always included skulls, or other grim reminders of human mortality, pictured in lush, fertile scenes or with young maidens.

The site was created by UC Berkeley computer scientist Ken Goldberg, with the help of graduate student Wojciech Matusik.

Goldberg is a guy who likes to mix art with leading edge In-

ternet sites.

He's the creator of Telegarden, a site that allows visitors to direct an industrial robot to choose a seed, plant and water it in a real garden in Brussels, Belgium. Gardeners can return to view their growing plant.

Memento Mori is just as real.

Visitors are greeted by a grinning human skull and a stark quotation from Joseph Conrad: "Vanity plays lurid tricks with our memory."

With that in mind, click the "enter" button.

"What you get is this haunting trace — it sort of sweeps across your screen," Goldberg says. "This is a live measurement from the earth." It's really not virtual at all. It's real life, he said.

The trace — a white line rises and falls as the ground moves along the fault. What you see was detected 30 seconds earlier by Streckeisen STS-1 seismometer near the UC Botanical Gardens up Strawberry Canyon from the university.

UC Berkeley seismologist Bob Uhrhammer explains that ground motion is constant.

"People don't sense an earthquake until it reaches magnitude 2," he said. "But we recently looked at the last 10 years of data and we found that Berkeley and the station at Caltech recorded an average of 102

seismic events a day in California."

"The first earthquake we ever recorded at the university was on April 24, 1887," Uhrhammer said. "But we have no idea where it was, since this was the only station on the West Coast."

"Now, anytime there's any ground motion exceeding background level we can detect it."

Goldberg said he got the idea for the site after moving to California from Pennsylvania and observing the collective amnesia about the danger of major earthquakes that affects most residents.

"It's a very natural reaction to something you can't do anything about," he said.

Memento Mori was a reminder to the nobility that we're all going to end up in the earth. It was a war against vanity."

The motif fit so nicely that a prestigious, juried, avant-garde art show in Tokyo has selected Memento Mori in a worldwide competition as one of 10 installations to be presented there at the ICC Biennale Exhibit 1999 next October.

Memento Mori can be found at www.memento.ieor.berkeley.edu. For information about the fault go to: www.seismo.berkeley.edu/seismo/hayward. The site includes detailed maps showing the location of the fault.