

# Earthquake forecasts' time has come

David Nabhan, Torrance Daily Breeze, 11-5-12

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THE recent news of the seismologists who were sentenced to prison in Italy recently for failing to warn the public about the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake has elicited groans from seismologists around the globe. The outrage is understandable, it's unfair to place decades of conflicting evidence from an entire discipline on the back of a few scientists.

But what should be gleaned from the story, from an American perspective, is that a watershed may have been reached with regard to seismic forecasting. A jury in Italy, at least, seems to have refused to buy into the supposed truism that earthquake prediction is impossible.

China, Japan, Russia and other nations long ago came to that conclusion - inaugurating organs of their federal governments dedicated to seismic forecasting that have operated for the last 40 years or more. The particular quake precursor unheeded in L'Aquila concerned radon gas. There is however another prediction tool that is also being ignored and which could cost another nation - not Italy - dearly.

Conjoined gravitational lunar and solar tides cause higher probability windows for seismicity to exist. According to USGS's "Deaths from US Earthquakes," 265 people have been killed within a 70-mile radius of downtown Los Angeles between 1933 (the year of the Long Beach Earthquake) and 1994 (the Northridge Earthquake). Every single one of those people perished at either dawn or dusk.

What is more, 75 percent of those fatalities not only took place between either 4 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. or 4 p.m. and 7:45 p.m., but also on the day of the new/full moon phase. The chances that eight killer quakes should have struck that way randomly can be summed up in two words: quite implausible.

San Franciscans need little help recalling what happened at dawn (5:12 a.m.) and dusk (5:04 p.m.) at a couple of points in their history. Seattle's, Vancouver's and Anchorage's record also exhibit the same earmarks. The greatest quake in North America's recorded history in 1964 destroyed Anchorage 13 minutes away from the exact moment when the parameters above say it might have.

Regarding tidal triggering of earthquakes, there are literally reams of peer-reviewed studies from all over the world, published in the most prestigious journals in existence, that say the exact same thing. Readers are invited to type "tidal triggering of earthquakes" in the search field that pops up on the NASA/Harvard Astrophysical Data Base (<http://adswww.harvard.edu/>) for an eye-opener.

Insofar as the broad-brushed "pseudo-science" pejorative that has so successfully and so incorrectly been linked with this issue, the L'Aquila trial says that might be coming to an end too.

It indicates there are people in Europe and Asia, and here in the U.S. too, who realize there is nothing beyond the ken of the human race - a clan of clever and gutsy anthropoids who may get knocked down from time to time but who always struggle back to their feet swinging hard enough to defeat any opponent foolish enough to climb into the ring.