

## Summary of Personal Accounts

Description: [Family living on ranch near Mackay, Idaho](#)  
Author: Haroldsen, Sara Beth  
[Info Categories:](#) E, N, P, R

Description: [Elk hunters who saw fault scarp form](#)  
Author: Stein, Ross S. and Robert C. Bucknam  
[Info Categories:](#) E, G, P

Description: [Hunter near Heard Lake in Idaho](#)  
Author: Barnes, Bill  
[Info Categories:](#) E, G, P

## Information Categories

### **A -- Aid:**

provide medical services, shelter, donations, loans, advice, encouragement, implement safety measures

### **B -- Building Damage:**

structure itself plus windows and chimneys (typically damage visible from outside the building)

### **E -- Earthquake**

#### **Description:**

where, when, duration, direction, sound, motion, number and timing of aftershocks

### **G -- Geologic Effects:**

changes at the Earth's surface, fault scarps, rockfalls, landslides, ground cracks, ground subsidence, sand boils, water spouts; effects on springs, lakes, wells

### **H -- Humor:**

### **I -- Impact:**

changes in daily routine; rumors; influx of reporters, politicians, cost in dollars

### **L -- Lifelines:**

effects on transportation: roads, bridges, railroads, airports

effects on communications: telephone, telegraph

effects on power, gas, water, and sewer lines

effects on dams

### **N -- Nonstructural Effects:**

effects on plaster, furnishings (typically damage or rearrangement of furnishings visible inside a building)

### **P -- People:**

effects on and responses to, during and after; deaths, injuries, near misses

### **R -- Recovery:**

clean up, rebuild

### **S -- Scientific:**

explanation of the day

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**Transcription of cassette tape:**  
**Recorded for educational purposes at the request of Dr. Fred May, Utah Division**  
**of Comprehensive Emergency Management**

Submitted by: Sara Beth Haroldsen

Mackay, Idaho

Location at time of earthquake: Ranch near Mackay, Idaho

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I have been asked to share with you some of the feelings we experienced as a family during the earthquake in our area in October of 1983, and the feelings that we are still experiencing.

Morgan, my husband, refers to me as his "Chilly streaker," and he can tease me all he wants about that, and you can even laugh if you care to, because it won't bother me in the least. I earned that title. I was taking a bath. You know Mother Nature doesn't choose a time when you're standing in a doorway and you're all prepared to shake, rattle and roll. It just happens when you're in the most inconvenient of situations. When I heard the roar and I saw the walls begin to wave, I stood up and grabbed my towel. The next thing I remember was lying on the bathroom floor with my towel still in my hand and my legs hanging on the inside of the bathtub, and the rest of me lying on the floor. I do not know how I missed hitting my head on either the sink or the hot water heater as I fell out. I was unable to get up during the quake, and so I laid there listening to my dishes falling out of my cupboard and shattering on the kitchen floor. I kept telling Morgan, "Get the boys," and I kept hearing Morgan yell back to me, "Get out of there." I kept telling him that (in my most womanly manner) I just couldn't because I didn't have a thing to wear. After realizing my bathrobe was not going to slide on my wet body, my pride left, and so did I. I am still frightened to take a bath early in the morning, and I will not bathe if I am alone in the house. I am just now getting so I feel comfortable closing the bathroom door while bathing.

Morgan was on the telephone at the time the quake hit, and our then two-year-old son, Samuel, was standing in front of the refrigerator. Morgan threw the phone and with strength he doesn't know where came from, pushed the refrigerator back, or we would have had another fatality in the earthquake. He removed our two-year-old Sam from the house. He then went into the bedroom where our then four-year-old son, Joshua, was sleeping in our bed. Joshua was climbing up the headboard of the bed, trying to climb up the walls to get out. He was screaming hysterically. The furniture in our bedroom was flying, the chest of drawers fell over on the baby's crib, the bookshelves flew, everything on the bookshelves flew. The TV, sitting on the dresser, went from one side of the room to the other. Joshua literally leaped into his father's arms because Morgan could not get through the mess to him. Our eighteen year old daughter, Melissa, was in her room sleeping. We had been up very late the night before, having arrived home at two o'clock in the morning. She ran from her room and was cut as a bookcase fell and hit her leg.

Our other two sons and our other daughter were in school. Rebecca at that time was in the fifth grade. She had gone to school early, and she was sitting in her classroom all alone. Her teacher came, opened the door, looked in at her, and she tells us Rebecca

was sitting there with her big brown eyes staring straight ahead. The teacher looked at her, yelled, and said "Get out," closed the door and ran. Rebecca did not know what to do.

Although we live in a sparsely populated area without large buildings, many busy highways, etc., the dangers and fears associated with a 7.3 earthquake are the same. As one news reporter from Los Angeles said the day of the quake, as she was reporting what had taken place, if this same quake had hit in our area, we would not be here to report it. We are grateful it did happen in our area, so there were not many deaths or injuries, but, nevertheless, we still have the same feelings to deal with. We have attitude and behavioral changes in ourselves and in our children which must be dealt with. For the first two weeks the most difficult thing was sleeping. We, I mean Morgan, Rebecca, Joshua, Melissa and I, slept in the same room--Rebecca lying in her dad's arms, Joshua in my lap, Melissa across the bottom of the bed, and Samuel in his crib. It was a common thing for children to want to be near their parents, and parents with their children. I don't think anyone really minded having the children out of school for the weeks they were. I slept with my glasses on, and also with my slippers and my bathrobe, so that if we had any tremors during the night and we needed to leave the house I would be prepared. I knew where all of the children's clothes were and their coats, positioned so that if we had to leave we could get them in a hurry. Lights were left on in just about every room of the house, and they still are left on in two rooms, the bedroom and the hallway. Morgan tells me I'm silly, because if we have an earthquake in the night, it will probably take out the electricity, but at least I have the comfort of knowing that when I go to bed the lights are on.

Following the original large quake there were many news reports that the Mackay dam had broken and that Mackay had been flooded. We immediately jumped into the car and headed to Mackay to check on the children that had gone to school. It was a wonderful sight to see the water still in the reservoir as we neared the town site of Mackay. Finding the children, we brought them home with us, and it was frightening to return to the house and to assess the damage. We were happy to still see the house there. We were devastated at the mess and the damage and the loss. Our house was damaged beyond repair, and we lost, of course, many heirlooms which are irreplaceable.

Before the earthquake Josh, our four-year-old, liked to stand on our kitchen table. I have three hanging plants above the table and Joshua liked to swing them, and I'm sure you have heard the song that goes, "B I N G O, Bingo was his name-O." Well, he would sing this, he would flip the plants, and he would sing "B I N G O, Bingo was its name," and he'd break my plants. I would scold him, and I would spank him, and I would put him down, and I would tell him that just wasn't the way to treat my plants, and he was ruining them. When we walked into the house, Melissa walked over and picked up a large piece of plant that had broken and was on the table. She picked it up and she held it, she swung it back and forth, and she said, "Look Mom, Bingo was its name," and at that very moment I realized how helpless I was. I can control my children, and I can teach them when they do wrong, but when something like an earthquake happens or another natural disaster you have no control. You are helpless. You cannot control Mother Nature.

Every room in our house was a mess but the older boys' bedroom. It looked just like a regular Sunday afternoon. It was interesting to note the strangeness of the earthquake and what happened. In the bathroom I had two plants sitting in the bathroom window. One of the plants stayed put in place; the other one was thrown across the room, hit the wall on the other side, bounced back and landed in the bathtub. My cupboards opened and every dish in my cupboards fell out onto the floor. On top of the cupboard I had stacked some large platters, my crock pots and things. They never moved an inch. They were still there when we returned. In our pantry it looked like some sections of our food had been just taken and scooped out and dumped on the floor. Jars and cans sitting right next to them would not have moved at all, and then there would be another section next to that that looked like someone had just scooped it out and dumped it on the floor. Our neighbors, three-quarters of a mile to the west of us, had no damage at all.

The children were really interesting to watch, especially the two little boys. They would play "earthquake." They would get their toys out, their houses and their blocks that they stacked for hay, and they would also get their cars and their trucks and they would get them all set up with their animals in corrals, and then they would say "Earthquake!" and just start scooping everything, flipping them all over. It was interesting to watch, and whenever we had a tremor we'd all run out of the house, and everyone was constantly on the alert. We developed the habit of pausing, listening and looking. You have your meters in your house, like if you have a plant you watched to see if it moves, to make sure that you're having the tremor that you think you are. Whenever a jet went over, we have several fighters that come over regularly, the boys would go hysterical. Joshua would yell, "Everybody out of the house!" Even the tough cowboys we have in the area that had just been through everything (the war and pretty hair-raising experiences), commented on how they had themselves timed and how quickly they could jump out of bed in the middle of the night, and be out of the house when they had a tremor. It got down to a matter of seconds. I still make sure that my cupboards are closed, and that they're locked, and that everything breakable is in the cabinets at night, that my closets are closed, and I know where my children's clothes are, as I said. I still lay them out, and I have them ready to get into if the situation arises that we have to leave.

My son Hans, who is now 20, refused to get out of the car and go see the slide area, the big scarp, the fault lines. He didn't want to be around it. His fear was getting out and being right there. He didn't like that. Joshua still goes hysterical when the wind blows. He associates it with the roar, the horrendous roar, that occurred before the quake, and he is still frightened to go to bed at night. He will go to bed if someone's still up, but he usually likes to wait and go to bed with someone. We are now, finally, I think, getting to the point where he will go to bed by himself, and stay there, but the wind still frightens him.

Shane, our now 18-year-old son, doesn't like to go out at night alone. A week after the earthquake, we had to go somewhere, and he was left home alone, and I called to check on him, and I said, "Shane, how you doing?" and he says, "Mom," he says, "I went out and milked the cow all by myself tonight in the dark." Just not too many weeks ago, he was home alone again, and I called from Idaho Falls to check on him, and I said, "Shane, how you doing?" and he said, "Mom, you know I still don't like to be in this house alone."

The earthquake not only affected the children and Morgan and I living at home, but it also has an effect on those of the family members who are away from home. Our daughter, Kim, was serving, at the time, an LDS mission in Australia. She had not heard about the earthquake until she was out tracting, and someone mentioned the earthquake in Idaho. Kim asked where it was and they told her Mackay. She said, "That's my home, that's where I'm from." And then someone told her that two children had been killed by the name of Haroldsen. Of course, this affected her. She called home immediately, and was relieved to find out that the children were not Haroldsen children, but it still affected her work. She was unable, she said, to work to her full capability for about three weeks.

We are still experiencing tremors, and we've had several since the first of this year. Not too many weeks ago we had one one evening. Rebecca was in her bedroom and Joshua was sitting in the living room. I was in the other room on the telephone, and Josh looked at me and I looked at him, and I said, "Yes, I think we're having an earthquake, Josh," and his eyes were just big, and he was sitting there so frightened, and he says, "Mom I thought a bear was trying to come in the front door." Rebecca came in and she said, "Mom, did we just have a tremor?" and I said "Yes we did." She says, "Oh, my windows felt like they were going to shake out."

We had another one just a couple of weeks ago that registered 4.6. Rebecca and I were in my bedroom laying on the bed trying to wake up our youngest, Matthew, and we heard the roar and it felt like the walls were just closing in on us. We grabbed Matt, and we ran out. All the men were sitting in the kitchen. Morgan had grabbed onto the table, and the plants were shaking back and forth. It's still quite an experience, even though you've been through it. With every tremor, you're never prepared for what you feel, or what you know can happen.

As I mentioned earlier, everyone has their meter. I was talking to the lady who has the IGA store in Mackay. They experienced quite a bit of damage in their grocery store the day of the quake, and she told me that they are still frightened, and she said they watch and they listen. Her husband came out of the bathroom the other morning and he said, "You know," he said, "the sky looks like it did the morning of the earthquake, and you know I really don't think the wind's blowing hard enough outside to make the water move in the toilet."

The mountains that surround our ranch and our home are beautiful, but now they're something to be feared. I look at these mountains with more respect because I never know when they might move again.

I am still grateful that it happened in our area and not a more populated one, and that loss of life was very small. Before, when I heard of an earthquake, I had a feeling of apathy. I would say, "Oh there, that will never happen here." Now I have a feeling of empathy. I know what it's like, and my heart aches for the people, and I want to take the children in my arms, and I want to comfort them and tell them that everything's okay, that things will get better.

There are many precautions that we can take. As one teacher said, after our earthquake, her comment was, "Through this I have learned that we as teachers need to be educated in what to do in these situations." I think this goes for every one of us. We all have the feeling that it'll never happen to us, and when it does we're never prepared. There is one thing that I think very strongly should be done. I have not yet

done this because it gives to me a feeling of finality, but some day I will. I feel that children should take with them, when they go to school, a change of clothes in their backpack, so that if something does happen during the day and they're unable to return home at night, they will have this change of clothing. Also, something should be tucked in that they are familiar with, a favorite toy, or maybe some favorite thing, so they would have that security if they were unable to return home at night.

When I speak of Joshua, our then four-year-old son, I think he expressed the feelings of all here in our valley. When we went back into the house to assess the damages, he looked around and he held out his arms and he said, "It's a beautiful day to be alive in such a mess."

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**Excerpt from: *Quake Replay in the Great Basin*; Natural History magazine; June 1986; p. 29**

Authors: Ross S. Stein and Robert C. Bucknam, U.S. Geological Survey  
Experiences of: Two groups of elk hunters at epicenter--Don Hendrickson and John Turner, Lawanna and William Knox  
Location at time of earthquake: Near north end of Lost River fault, in Custer County, Idaho

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Elk hunters Don Hendrickson and John Turner were driving their Ford Bronco down a dirt road in Arentson Gulch, at the northern end of the Lost River fault in Idaho, when Don suddenly felt light-headed. "I lost my equilibrium. I felt like I was going to pass out. I was ready to tell John at that time, 'There's something wrong with me,' and right after that the Bronco just started shaking like crazy. It was off the ground completely, just rocking like this, and right soon after that, the bank dropped and I was hanging on to the steering wheel." The fault cut the ground sixty feet in front of them and dropped the side bearing the Bronco three feet. "I looked over to John and he was flying in the passenger seat. He was between the two seats, trying to get up. And he said, 'What's going on?' I wasn't about to answer, because I didn't know." Later, Don recalled, "That's when the quake went into its greatest violence, and that's when the noise came in. And it was deafening, a deafening rumble." The noise may have been the sound of rock grinding along the fault face or of landslides and boulders tumbling down the steep mountain front.

A half mile to the north of the bucking Bronco, William Knox was driving elk over a ridge while his wife, Lawana, waited below for a clear shot. When the shaking started, William felt sick and instantly went down on one knee. As the motion intensified, he lay on his stomach and was rolled back and forth by the ground motion. The shaking "might have been a half minute but it felt like a lifetime," said Lawana, who suffered whiplash from the quake's strong motion. When the shaking subsided, she watched the rupture cut across the mile-wide hillside, "just as though one took a paintbrush and painted a line along the hill." In a second it raised one side of the hill and dropped the other side three feet. Eyewitness accounts of the fault rupture--as opposed to the shaking--are rare; these observations help clarify the speed and character of the rupture.

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**Letter written in response to article published in newspaper requesting personal accounts of earthquakes in the Intermountain West.**

Submitted by: Bill Barnes

Healdsburg, California

January 1996

Location at time of earthquake: Above Heard Lake, Idaho near epicenter

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My name is Bill Barnes. This is my first earthquake, so I am not experienced with any part of it. I was on a hunting trip with my friend whom I have hunted with for years. We went to Heard creek which is at the east fork of the Salmon River. We passed Heard Lake which, I understand, was also created by an earthquake. We were headed up the mountain 5 miles up the hill past this lake. I dropped my friend off about a mile from the top of the mountain so he could walk up the canyon. I was to meet him at the top. When I got to the top, I slowed down waiting for him to show up. I heard this terrible noise like the earth was coming to an end. I didn't understand it at all. The trees were whipping back and forth almost touching the ground. The jeep I was driving was bouncing back and forth from one wheel to the other. I thought I must have run up on top of a stump. I got out and looked and saw nothing. I continued on my way not knowing anything about what was happening. I drove out of the trees into a clearing and could see about a mile ahead of me. The earth looked like ocean waves. I still had no idea what was happening.

I decided I wasn't in danger, so I went back looking for my friend. I went to where I thought he would be and there he was running up the hill. I guess you know what I said. All he could say was, "It's an earthquake! Let's get out of here." I picked him up, and he said, "We will never get out of here." I didn't know what he meant, not knowing anything about earthquakes, but I soon found out.

We headed back down the road, and saw rocks right in the middle of the road. I knew we were in trouble. We backed up the hill away from the rocky cliffs and decided we would have to walk out. There were lots of rocks and breaks in the road. I took pictures, but my friend just wanted to get out of there... It wasn't much of a problem. We only had to walk 5 miles down the hill. My friend had relatives about 30 miles away who alerted the rangers where we were and they came looking for us. We only had to walk to the lake where we met the ranger. He was getting in his truck to leave. I could see him from about a half mile away, so I fired a shot from my rifle into the air. He heard it and got back out. When I saw that, I knew that we were rescued. He was glad to see us and we were more glad to see him. He said it took him 2 hours to clear the road enough to get into the lake where we met him. The ranger took us back to town to our pickup and we were okay then.

One week later we were notified that they were going to get our jeep out. They had to hire an independent operator for the job. They told us not to go back in there again, as they couldn't afford to dig us out again. They dug a big ditch across the road to make sure. I have been in there since on my 4 wheeler, still my favorite spot to go. This was my first experience with an earthquake and hopefully my last.

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