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## CANADA

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### It was no megathrust, no Big One. But the recent, moderate B.C. earthquake stirred up big worries

BRIAN HUTCHINSON | January 1, 2016 5:30 PMET  
More from Brian Hutchinson | @hutchwriter



'It was an earthquake,' Brian Hutchinson writes, 'moderate in power but impossible to ignore. We were slightly confused, a little scared, and completely, hopelessly unprepared. And we weren't laughing anymore.'

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VANCOUVER — It seemed funny at the time.

We were home Tuesday evening, a TV newscast switched on but mostly ignored. Then came an item that caught our attention: A demonstration of newfangled beds, equipped to detect seismic tremors and ready to collapse with their occupants, tossed like ragdolls, into solid, sealed metal boxes. Earthquake-proof, it was claimed.

Ludicrous contraptions, or so they seemed. We had a good laugh before crawling into our own queen-size, a bed so old-fashioned that it doesn't recline, let alone

Vancouver after the big one: 7.3-magnitude earthquake would kill nearly 10,000 and injure 128,000, experts say

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The defending champions finished in sixth place, ahead of only Denmark, Slovakia, Switzerland and Belarus. It was the country's worse finish since 1998

Longing for Montreal — a decadent city in a lagging province that still suits me better than Toronto



Mreille Silcoff: Toronto used to be an under-confident city. In 2002, I felt like I got off the train to a fanfare of apologies. You moved here from Montreal? Sorry

Canada 'shot themselves in the foot' during loss at world juniors, U.S. head coach says

transform into an indestructible tomb.

Twenty minutes before midnight, the bedroom began to move. The apartment shifted. The whole damn building swayed.

It was an earthquake, moderate in power but impossible to ignore. We were slightly confused, a little scared, and completely, hopelessly unprepared. And we weren't laughing anymore.

"What do we do?" my wife wondered out loud. Quite loud.

"Uh, get under a doorway?" My response was lame and, I was later informed, quite wrong.

Tuesday's magnitude 4.7 event was located about 50 kilometres under southern Vancouver Island and could be felt across British Columbia's southern coast. It wasn't the first shaker ever in the region, of course, nor the strongest, nor was it an isolated event; in fact, it was the 10th earthquake recorded around the world Tuesday.



Tuesday night's "light" earthquake was a good reminder of our need to be prepared for a bigger earthquake. PNG Merin Archive Here, Dayana Hlalgo receives assistance from one of the members of the Neighborhood Emergency Assistance Team during an earthquake disaster scenario in Vancouver in 2014.

It was no "megathrust," no Big One. There were no reports of injuries, or physical damage, aside from some broken bottles, such as those discovered later on a Sidney, B.C., liquor store floor. But the event rattled people. Earthquake report hotlines caught fire.

"Felt it while I was sitting at my computer, all my bobble heads were shaking," reported someone in Langley, near Vancouver. "Lasted fairly long, long enough for me to start yelling about it before it was over."

"Caused my head to sway slightly. More of a feeling of being inebriated but I hadn't consumed any alcohol," noted a correspondent in Chilliwack.

"Cat got nervous," chimed in a Nanaimo resident.

## Related

[B.C. earthquake shakes Victoria and Vancouver area: Buildings rattle but no damage reported](#)

I called around the next day. A relative on Vancouver Island said she felt her house

Skyscrapers sway. Some buildings collapse, and many others shift and crack.

The ground ruptures in some areas. There are fires from broken gas lines and flooding from the recent rains increases as some dikes fail.

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Add Ron Wilson's name to the list of those who questioned the job Team Canada head coach Dave Lowy did at the world junior championship

## 'Unforgettable in our hearts forever': Singer Natalie Cole dies at 65 after 'fierce, courageous battle'



Natalie died Thursday evening at Cedar Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles due to complications from ongoing health issues, her family said in a statement

## I'm sorry for calling Disney 'white slavers': George Lucas in apology for Star Wars comments



Lucas says he misspoke and used a 'very inappropriate analogy.' '...I feel it is important to make it clear that I am thrilled that Disney has the franchise'

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## Astound and inspire hungover friends with your knowledge of 2015's major news events



Test your knowledge of the past year's major news events with our interactive quiz.

## Our most-read stories of 2015: Kids' food, becoming disabled by choice and The Dress. Also, cats are jerks



The top stories of the year mostly avoided clichés about web news. Except for #10 — 'Your cat doesn't love you: science.' Reddit seemed to love that one

This couple's finances look good on the surface, but dig deeper and problems emerge

shake and heard a loud “bang” when the quake hit. I asked what precautions she has taken, should the Big One arrive.

“I have a can opener in my closet,” she said. “I suppose I should get some cans.”

On Wednesday, CBC radio interviewed Victoria’s mayor, Lisa Helps. Asked about her earthquake preparedness, Helps mentioned some of the stuff she has squirreled away in her backyard. Ten days supply of food and water, for starters. I felt more shame.

I probably wasn’t alone. “Late-night earthquake ‘a wake-up call,’” screamed a local headline Thursday, with a story underneath that explained why people living in earthquake zones — and in B.C.’s case, the dreaded Cascadia subduction zone — must have proper earthquake plans.

In our home, the post-4.7 quake discussion moved from door-frames-make-lousy-earthquake-protection-because-the-Internet-says-so, to appropriate apocalypse attire to the inevitable “should we move/where else are we going to live?”

I decided emotions were too raw to pull from our magazine pile the July 20, 2015 edition of The New Yorker, with its terrifying earthquake feature, “[The Really Big One.](#)” The real horror is revealed in the subtitle: “An earthquake will destroy a sizeable portion of the coastal Northwest. The question is when.”

“When the next very big earthquake hits, the northwest edge of the continent, from California to Canada and the continental shelf to the Cascades, will drop by as much as six feet and rebound thirty to a hundred feet to the west

The writer, Kathryn Schultz, describes in great detail our Cascadia subduction zone and what will happen when the Big One occurs. Which it will. Perhaps any day now.

“When the next very big earthquake hits, the northwest edge of the continent, from California to Canada and the continental shelf to the Cascades, will drop by as much as six feet and rebound thirty to a hundred feet to the west — losing, within minutes, all the elevation and compression it has gained over centuries,” writes Schultz.

“Some of that shift will take place beneath the ocean, displacing a colossal quantity of seawater...The water will surge upward into a huge hill, then promptly collapse. One side will rush west, toward Japan. The other side will rush east, in a seven-hundred-mile liquid wall that will reach the Northwest coast, on average, fifteen minutes after the earthquake begins. By the time the shaking has ceased and the tsunami has receded, the region will be unrecognizable.”

Schultz goes into more detail about what to expect — utter chaos — and what will be left — very little. It’s a remarkable piece, and anyone who reads it — especially those of us living in or near the Cascadia subduction zone — may feel helpless and doomed.

Or, we might prepare, as best we can. I checked: Earthquake beds start at about \$500.

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**Bill Danark** · Self Employed at Self-Employed

Must have been caused by climate change! Call Suzuki.

Like · Reply · 27 · Jan 1, 2016 12:51pm



**Bob Adams** · Toronto, Ontario

Pretty sad that you have nothing to say about the actual article. There is no wonder that newspapers are dropping comment sections : people like you are the reason.

Like · Reply · 2 · Jan 2, 2016 7:20am



**Don Webb**

Bob Adams...The problem is naive people take Suzuki and Gore as gospel. They use natural world events to fear monger your money into their bank accounts. Eventually they will find a way to blame humans for causing earth quakes and volcanoes.

Like · Reply · 4 · Jan 2, 2016 9:15am



**Drew Chatterton** · University of victoria

Bob Adams - if you look closely you will see in the article. in blue, the phrase `the really big one` ` If you hover your cursor over this phrase,it will magically turn into a little hand icon - this is called a `link` and if you click it, it will magically transport you to the the very article you mentioned.

Like · Reply · 3 · Jan 2, 2016 9:17am

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**Brian Vaselenak** · Fort McMurray, Alberta

Are the n d p and Lieberals going to bring in a earthquake tax? You never know.

Like · Reply · 18 · Jan 1, 2016 6:56pm



**Brian Dinsmore** · Banff, Alberta

provincial and federal response teams are already in place with near unlimited funding should it be required. Like Slave Lake. That some people think natural disasters are somehow partisan designed emergancies baffles the mind

Like · Reply · 5 · Jan 1, 2016 8:17pm



**Monica Proestakis**

quit giving them ideas please!

Like · Reply · 8 · Jan 1, 2016 8:39pm



**Joe Simpson**

@Brian- If they taxed stupidity, you'd be screwed.

Like · Reply · 4 · Jan 2, 2016 7:01am

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**Brian Dinsmore** · Banff, Alberta

Why all the fear of a big earthquake???

Modern science is all garbage science.... according to those that deny climate change. So, stay high, stay dry and study your bible.

Like · Reply · 5 · Jan 1, 2016 8:12pm



**Monica Proestakis**



So, what I hear you saying is, is don't be partisan, but it's ok to lump all people who deny climate change as bible thumpers. Got it.

Like · Reply · 12 · Jan 1, 2016 8:41pm



**Brian Dinsmore** · Banff, Alberta

Monica Proestakis seems you have beaten your self senseless with your bible already.

Like · Reply · 1 · Jan 2, 2016 9:46am



**Tomas Douglas** · SAIT Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (Calgary AB Canada)

Brian - It sounds like you would rather have governments waste money on reducing carbon dioxide and subsidizing green energy than on disaster mitigation and preparation.

Like · Reply · 3 · 23 hrs



**Rick Lauridsen-Hoegh** · Concordia/Ottawa U

Well, that's one way to shake up the housing market...

Like · Reply · 6 · Jan 1, 2016 8:33pm · Edited



**Terry Rogers** · Vancouver, British Columbia

Like a bowel movement, it'll pass.

Like · Reply · 3 · Jan 1, 2016 10:03pm

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