

**Datestamp:** 08/25/2011

## **Earthquake's aftershock is worry over Hurricane Irene**

When she felt the Westchester County courthouse in White Plains rumble Tuesday afternoon, Nelly Tsuji knew exactly what it was right away.

The California native is familiar with the frequent quaking of firm ground.

"The second it started happening I thought, 'Oh, we're having an earthquake,' " she said. Not a big deal, been there, done that.

But then she had a second thought.

"Wait a minute – we're not supposed to have earthquakes on the East Coast," said Tsuji, who lives in White Plains.

A day after the magnitude 5.8 temblor was felt up and down the Atlantic coast, people were still talking about the quake – and thankful it did little damage.

Thoughts were beginning to shift to the specter of Hurricane Irene, which strengthened into a powerful Category 3 storm in the Caribbean and was expected to barrel up the East Coast over the weekend.

"I'm hoping it just passes us by," said Cyril Morris of Mount Vernon. "The earthquake was enough. No more, please."

Morris didn't feel the jolt Tuesday as he worked in a printing press in downtown White Plains. He went home thinking it was no big deal.

But a day later, he was more worried by the thought of another earthquake.

"It is a big deal," he said. "An earthquake should be a big deal. I'm scared now."

Others were no more worried Wednesday than when the quake struck the day before.

"Much ado about nothing," said Leigh Friguglietti, of White Plains, as she read a book near the Renaissance

Plaza Fountain in downtown White Plains.

She was at the gym Tuesday when the quake struck and didn't feel it.

"I think I'm the only one," she said, laughing. She said she would be more worried about Hurricane Irene if she owned property in Florida or Georgia.

"It's hurricane season," she said with a shrug. "It's all just a reminder that natural disasters are a part of life."

High school teacher Joel Jackel of New City plans to use Tuesday's earthquake in his Earth science classes in the new school year.

"There is a belief that New York doesn't get earthquakes," he said, adding, "What happened on Tuesday refutes that."

Bedford resident Tina Beak, who was out shopping with her 5-month-old son, Emery, in Mount Kisco, said she didn't feel Tuesday's earthquake at all. She was more concerned that the hurricane could put a damper on her weekend plans with family visiting from Michigan.

"I am hoping it's not too bad," she said. "It's weird, all this crazy weather we are having."

The quake was still in the thoughts of Lesley McCrory on Wednesday, a day after she felt the Westchester County courthouse swaying.

"But I think less of it today than I did yesterday," she said. "It's probably because everything's returned to normal and there was no damage." She said the quake felt like construction was going on in the courthouse – only without the noise associated with jackhammers and drills.

McCrory, who lives in Danbury, Conn., and Tsuji are going to Boston for the weekend – and hoping the hurricane doesn't spoil it.

"It's just weird – earthquakes, the weather," Tsuji said. "Since when do we have tornado watches?"

The proximity of the earthquake to the possible hurricane gave McCrory pause as well.

"It does make you think of things like Armageddon and so forth," McCrory said. "But you can't spend your life worrying about what's going to happen. Take it as it comes."

*Staff writers Terry Corcoran, Brian Howard, Alex Taylor and Swapna Venugopal contributed to this report.*

**Caption:** People on Martin Luther King Boulevard after being evacuated Tuesday from the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains.

Frank Becerra Jr./The Journal News

**Section:** NEWS

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**Byline:** Timothy O'Connor

**Source:**

**From:**