

6:18 a.m. — whole lot of shakin' goin' on

•Related story, 3A
By DON DEPERRO
Gazette Staff Writer

The largest earthquake to hit New York State in nearly 40 years barely managed to stir most sleeping Niagarans, but for some it was a rude awakening yesterday morning.

The quake, which registered a 5.2 on the Richter scale, occurred at 6:18 a.m., with perceptible shock waves lasting about 20 seconds, Steve McNutt, a seismologist at Lamont-Doherty Observatory in Palisades, N.Y., said.

That 20 seconds was enough to conjure notions at one Niagara Falls police lieutenant's home that a prowler had arrived.

"I got out of bed to see if someone was inside the house," said Lt. Roland Nafus. "I felt the bed shaking, and we had some visitors from out-of-town staying downstairs and they felt it, too."

Nafus, who lives in the LaSalle area, said the initial jolt caused his dog to start barking. "It woke us all up," he

said.

An official at the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo., said the quake was felt from Montreal to Baltimore, and from Detroit to Boston. "One person called from Detroit," Physical Science Technician Frank Baldwin said. "He was on the top floor of an office building."

The quake was centered about 9 miles east-northeast of Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y., McNutt said. Blue Mountain Lake, in Hamilton County, is about 85 miles northwest of Albany, and is the home of about 1,000 people.

"It was really scary," said Dorothy Swanson, a secretary at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake. "Amazingly enough there was not much damage at all."

Officials reported no injuries or major damage.

Ms. Swanson said all the glass in her A-frame home rattled throughout the 20 second tremor, but only one drinking glass broke.

Mrs. James W. Emerson, of nearby Long Lake, said she "realized right away" that she was in the midst of an earthquake. "It was a deep rumble," she said. "You just kind of keep your fingers crossed."

"We had a lot of residents call who were concerned about the tower," said Lewiston Town Supervisor James J. Lombardi, regarding a radioactive waste silo at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works.

A visual examination at the site made by federal Department of Energy workers said the silo sustained no damage.

The quake registered between 3 and 3.5 on the Richer scale at the Pletcher Road site. A more thorough investigation of the site will follow, Lombardi said, and added he has requested a written report from federal officials.

In Bergholtz, Kathy Potter said, "My husband thought I was out of my mind. I was in the kitchen and my refrigerator began shaking. I thought the house was collapsing."