

the Print

Clackamas Community College

Vol. XVIII, No. 8

Wednesday, November 21, 1984

EPA rules water safe to drink Health hazard could happen again

By Fritz Wenzel
Of The Print

Nine days after Clackamas Community College's water was found to contain high levels of potentially-dangerous bacteria, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lifted a boil water advisory on Monday, Nov. 19.

Sixteen tests taken over the last three days indicated the bacteria fecal coliform, which comes specifically from the intestines of warm-blooded animals, was no longer present in the system.

"The disinfection system broke down, and when that happens, there is nothing standing between you and the

watershed," EPA environmental engineer Ron Culver said. "There is the potential of any number of bacteria to be present in the water. The two most common health problems would be Giardia and Hepatitis," he added.

"If fecal coliform was found in the water, then you could have run-off from a riverbank as well as from a cattlefield," Dan Lundy, the College's instructor in the water quality technology said.

Lundy explained that fecal coliform itself is harmless, but its presence in the water indicated there could be other bacteria present that could cause problems.

The contamination problem began

when recent hard rains caused soil from the riverbanks to wash down into the Clackamas River and into the water system, Culver said. Due to an overabundance of particles in the water, a condition known as turbidity, the chlorination system was neutralized, he said.

"Testing done Nov. 9 indicated there was a total coliform bacteria present in the water," Culver said, "so we issued the boil water advisory early that afternoon." The College was first made aware of the problem on a widespread basis by the issuance of a memo to all staff members dated Nov. 13. All water fountains were shut off at that time.

Lundy explained a total coliform situation indicates there could be harmful bacteria present. The next step, then, is to test for fecal coliform, which would indicate a possible serious health threat exists. Total coliform bacteria comes from both plants and animals, while fecal coliform comes specifically from warm-blooded animals.

The College, along with Oregon City Fire Station 2 and Prince of Life Lutheran Church, receives its water from a 68-year-old steel pipe system known as the mountain line. The line is 16 inches in diameter and runs 27 miles from the south fork of the Clackamas
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IN THE TRENCHES--
Construction workers Win Demenge (front) and Harold Walz prepare foundation for pouring of cement on Barlow Hall addition construction site. Contracted for \$700,000, the new addition is expected to be completed sometime in April.

Photo by Joel Miller

Scholarship honors President Hakanson

Clackamas Community College's Board of Education members unanimously voted to establish a full-year music scholarship in honor of College President John Hakanson at a special meeting held Nov. 14.

The John W. Hakanson scholarship will be awarded annually to an outstanding music student. Criteria for the scholarship will be determined by Music Department representatives and the student financial aid officer.

Hakanson was honored with a music scholarship because of his long-time interest in the subject. Both

Hakanson and his wife Helen sing in the Lutheran Choral Association, and Helen Hakanson participates in local old-time fiddle groups.

The scholarship was originally to be funded by investing an initial amount of \$6,000 through the College's Foundation, with the interest accrued to be used for the award. The College's attorney determined, however, that Oregon statutes prevent the College from making a gift of money to the Foundation in perpetuity, so the Board voted to rescind the previous action and seek other funding.

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filing deadline near

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