

Portland is Earthquake Country

Continued From Previous Page

other expected problems from future earthquakes. Clark has degrees in geology and political science and is DOGANI's Earth Science Information Officer. "My job is to turn the scientific research into something that doesn't sound like an engineer wrote it," she kids Wang. "It's sometimes hard to give people the information they need to get ready, without scaring them to death. But it's all a matter of context. I lived in the Midwest for a while and I'll take our rare earthquakes over their yearly tornadoes any time."

"What gives me the most confidence," says Clark, "is the amount of preparation we've already made as a community. Twenty years ago we didn't know about the threat of subduction quakes, and we really underestimated the severity of other

earthquakes. So we've done a lot in a fairly short period of time. We've made our building codes stronger, so that new buildings will be safer, and we've started to institutionalize information about earthquakes. For example, there's now a state law that says schoolkids must have an earthquake drill every year. In Portland, we're strengthening both our schools and fire stations. We're not as prepared as we should be, but we are much, much more prepared than we were 20 years ago."

DOGANI has prepared relative earthquake hazard maps for several areas of the state, including Portland. "There are three major geologic features that can increase damage from an earthquake," says Wang. "Amplification means the destructive energy of the quake is actually amplified in some areas with cer-

tain types of soil. Those soils are very common in Portland and the Willamette Valley. Liquefaction occurs when the soil starts to flow like a liquid. When that happens, it can no longer support structures on top of it and buildings can be seriously damaged. This happens mostly near rivers. The third problem is landslides, and after the last few years of wintertime slides, people are aware of what a huge problem that can be in Portland."

There are many things you can do to prepare for an earthquake. "Everybody in Oregon should know how to duck, cover and hold," says Wang firmly. "Kids are taught in school that if you feel shaking, you should get under something strong, like a table, and hold on until it's over. But adults need to do that, too. The

worst thing you can do is run outside or stand in a doorway," she adds, "and that's what a lot of us were taught to do."

"The first thing you're going to want to know after an earthquake is how your family and friends are," says Clark. An easy way to start preparing is to put together a family disaster plan. "If your family is like mine, you spend more time apart from each other than together. You can decide as a family where to meet if you're separated during a quake or any other disaster." You should also choose someone who lives outside Oregon for everyone to call and check in with. "In a disaster situation, you'll be able to make long distance phone calls before you'll be able to make

local calls," warns Clark.

Wang suggests you look around your house and office to see what might fall and cause injuries. "You want to look for things like bookcases that could fall off a wall," she suggests. Many places have tips on how to prepare you and your home for an earthquake, including the Red Cross. Earthquake hazard maps can be purchased from the Nature of the Northwest in Portland (800 NE Oregon St.) and on the internet at www.naturenw.org.

Wang and Clark agree that it's important not to focus on the danger from earthquakes. "My advice is to take it seriously and do what you can to prepare," Wang says. "Then go out and enjoy life."



The Portland Hills fault line runs clear through downtown. Another one within the city is the East Bank fault which runs along the east bank of the Willamette River in north Portland.

Top 10 Movies

- THIS WEEK
- 1 American Pie
 - 2 Wild Wild West
 - 3 Arlington Road
 - 4 Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace
 - 5 Tarzan
 - 6 The General's Daughter
 - 7 South Park: Bigger, Louder & Uncut
 - 8 Notting Hill
 - 9 Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me
 - 10 Big Daddy

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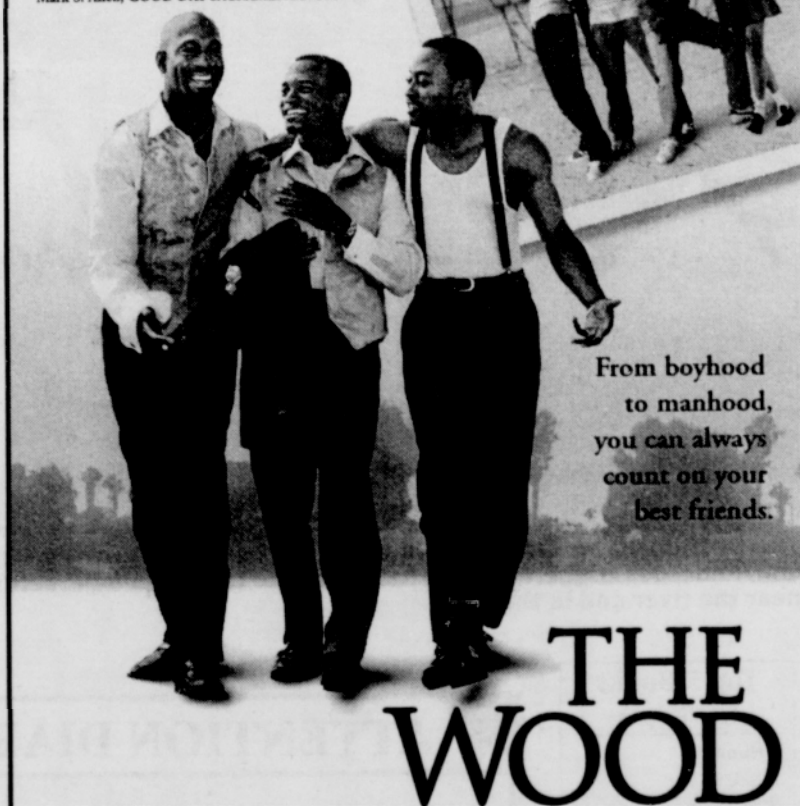
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