

## Red Cross volunteers practice disaster to prepare for real thing



Satisfied with a good day's work, Red Cross volunteers and others involved in the disaster exercise pause for a group photo.

A group of 35 Columbia County Red Cross volunteers held a disaster response drill at Washington Grade School in Vernonia on Saturday, February 24, just a few days before the earthquake that apparently surprised most people in north-west Oregon. The volunteers set up a shelter, served meals and handled donations for disaster victims, all over the course of a few hours.

The Red Cross currently has 42 trained volunteers in Columbia County who are ready to respond to disasters ranging from single-family house fires to catastrophic floods. The February 24 exercise was a test of how well they can put their training into practice.

"When possible, we try to create a disaster drill with conditions as close as possible to what the volunteers will face in a real disaster," said Emily Hastie, Disaster Outreach Spe-

cialist for the Oregon Trail Chapter.

The volunteers started by assessing feeding needs, in a scenario about flooding that displaced 50 people from their homes. Volunteers planned and prepared a lunch for the disaster clients, set up the shelter and worked with clients who were lining up at the front door. The drill also involved students from the grade school who helped set up cots, and amateur radio operators who tested communication capabilities.

Red Cross provides free training for volunteer disaster responders and disaster preparedness educators in Columbia County and the other five counties in the Oregon Trail Chapter. For more information, call Hastie at 503-284-0011, ext. 273 or e-mail <hastie@redcross-pdx.org>

### Red Cross shows gains in county

There are currently 42 Red Cross Responders in Columbia County, nine of them in Vernonia. During 2000, volunteers responded to nine fires. Additionally, canteen service was provided to fire fighters in Rainier.

Seven training courses were offered throughout the county with 51 people attending.

### Watershed members learn how insects indicate health of stream

By Jim Buxton

Jeff Adams, a biologist with the Xerces Society, presented a report on the analysis of 1999 macroinvertebrate (insect) samples taken from the Nehalem River and its tributaries, at the February meeting of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC).

The samples, taken by volunteers trained to follow a strict collection protocol, were sent to a laboratory in Idaho for analysis. Adams showed slides and described what one would likely find in the Nehalem. He has presented the Council with similar reports in previous years, and his presentation is improving each year. Next year, Adams plans to have laminated field guides and CD-ROMs categorizing local insects, to hand out to attendees.

He described the collection method and assessment criteria, and added that, whereas the use of volunteers to collect samples is generally considered a poor practice, the data show that volunteer collection in the Nehalem has been very consistent. The laboratory counts the number of different kinds of insects in the sample, and the number of each kind. Then the sample is ranked into three categories of stream health: "No Impairment", "Moderate" or "Poor".

The assumption is that the more insect species and population that live in a body of water, the healthier it is. Following are some of the results of

Shelter agreements are in place with 32 facilities, including Vernonia High School, Cedar Ridge Sports Camp, Washington Grade School and Lincoln Grade School.

Participation in the Columbia Emergency Planning Association and Emergency Management Council groups is continuing project.

### Very little earthquake damage in Columbia County

Columbia County came through the February 28 earthquake relatively unscathed, with only minor damage reported to two buildings. Elsewhere in Oregon, damage was also limited.

Ironically, John Clouse, Columbia County Director of Emergency Management, was in Salem when the earthquake hit, at a meeting with emergency management officials from around the state. Among the topics under discussion was an earthquake drill being planned for April 11.

"This is exactly why Columbia County needs to hold the April 11 earthquake exercise called Metroshake-01," Clouse said. "Emergency management personnel assigned to positions in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) need to become familiar with the EOC procedures so that when events like what happened

Wednesday occur, we are all better prepared to protect the life and property of the citizens we serve," Clouse continued.

While no injuries were reported in Columbia County, Clouse expressed concern over reports that many citizens were seen running out of buildings when they felt the shaking, then standing close to the building. Most people injured or killed in an earthquake are those who run in and out of buildings or stand within 30 feet of a building, according to Clouse.

Emergency management officials suggest that when you feel an earthquake, you should immediately drop to the floor, seek cover such as under a desk, table or an interior doorway and hold onto that cover so that you move with it. Also, stay as far away from windows as possible.

Much of the damage that occurs in an earthquake is from

items falling off of shelves. Clouse suggests that people survey their homes for items that could fall when a small amount of shaking occurs and either move those items to a safer location or secure them with mortician's clay. Items large enough to cause injury should be taken down and placed on the floor.

Wednesday's quake is a reminder that disaster can strike anywhere, anytime. The American Red Cross and others suggest that every home be equipped with a 72 hour survival kit, including food, water, medications, clothes, flashlights and batteries, cooking utensils and tools.

A pamphlet entitled "Before Disaster Strikes, How Families and Individuals Can Prepare," is available from the Oregon Trails Chapter by calling 503-284-0011.

### Poetry contest open to all ages, styles, skill levels

The International Library of Poetry will award \$58,000 in prizes this year in the International Open Poetry Contest. All poets, particularly beginners, are welcome to try winning some of the 250 prizes. The deadline for the contest

is April 30, 2001. The contest is open to everyone and entry is free.

"Any poet, whether previously published or not, can be a winner," stated Christina Babylon, Contest Director. "When people learn about our

free poetry contest, they suddenly realize that their own poetic works of art can win cash prizes, as well as gain national recognition," continued Babylon.

To enter, send one original poem, any subject and style to The International Library of Poetry, Suite 19910, 1 Poetry Plaza, Owings Mills, MD 21117. You may also enter online at [www.poetry.com](http://www.poetry.com)

The poem should be 20 lines or less and the poet's name and address should appear on the top of the page. Entries must be postmarked or sent via the Internet by April 30, 2001. The International Library of Poetry, founded in 1982, is the largest poetry organization in the world.

### Volunteers needed to plant trees

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the Boy Scouts Troop 201, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, students from Vernonia High School, Washington Grade School and Pacific University, private landowners and watershed council members have planted thousands of trees donated by the Bureau of Land Management. It is hoped that this tradition will continue.

Everyone participating in the program is covered for lia-

bility under the Natural Resource Conservation Service Earth Team Volunteer Program.

Landowners who would like to have their river frontage planted, who just need some trees to plant or want to volunteer to plant, may get more information by calling Peyton at 503-429-2401, or Donna Hepler, Volunteer Planting Coordinator, at 503-429-3401.