

Red Cross recalls mock disaster

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hazardous commodities through built-up areas in Canada to travel at no more than 45 miles per hour and that they be inspected every 20 miles as they move through populated areas.

The Halton Hills emergency team reported on their own experience with disaster, which fortunately was a fabricated one. Videotaped last February in Georgetown, the mock disaster was held to test how community organizations would cope with a disaster situation and to discover weaknesses in dealing with it.

The fire department, regional police, Red Cross, and



KAREN PORTER

Scouts took part in the mock disaster.

The fire department started a mock fire and the young people pretended somewhat unconvincingly to be the victims. The videotape recorded them giggling infectiously while they were being bandaged and swathed in blankets.

INJURED OUT

The mock disaster gave the participants an opportunity to practice their bandaging and help "injured" people to evacuate, said Jack Reed, a member of the team.

"There would probably be a field doctor or an ambulance team looking after the victims

on a real site, and not the Red Cross," he said.

The "victims" were taken to Georgetown and District High School, where they were registered, given blankets, simple first aid and food.

Mr. Reed said the high school provided an excellent shelter, with everything that was required on one floor.

He said distribution of food at the school was well organized, but that there were problems with the ham radio because the operator was inexperienced and the command centre should have been closer to the communication centre.

"We need more help in the transportation department,"

he said, pointing out that only two people had shown up to drive busloads of evacuees to the high school.

Mr. Reed mentioned that the first aid department soon realized they were short of supplies and used the ham radio to get more. He suggested clipboards would be useful for those doing registration and inquiry.

Erica Thompson, branch president, recommended that no further disasters be undertaken in Halton Hills until the bugs of last February are worked out.

TOWN CALLS
She said it was up to the municipal authorities to call

the next mock emergency and not the Red Cross.

"Our training should be passive now for awhile," she said, suggesting a listing of private homes available as shelters be collated and "quiet" activities to maintain interest be undertaken by members.

"We only respond when we're asked, then we do what we're told during an emergency situation," Mr. Reed said. "We want to build up our team and resources now to be prepared."

The Red Cross is conducting a mini-course on emergency response Oct. 31, and invites the community to register.



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