

## CERT program prepares Solana Beach, Del Mar residents for emergencies



Solana Beach and Del Mar CERT members with chopper

**By Diane Y. Welch**  
*Contributor*

The recent power outage that caused over five million residents regionally to be kept in the dark for 12 hours brought to light an increased awareness about emergency preparedness. For several citizens in the coastal communities of Del Mar, Solana Beach, Encinitas and Rancho Santa Fe, thanks to their training to be certified members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), they were more than ready to handle the situation.

CERT Academy is a program that educates people about disaster preparedness in their area. It trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. According to the City of Solana Beach website, by using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT graduates are equipped to assist others following an emergency event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

On Sunday, Oct. 2, CERT graduates and their families gathered for a picnic at Powerhouse Park in Del Mar. It was an opportunity for team members to meet with, and to get to know, other CERT members from neighboring coastal cities, and to strengthen cross-community team awareness, which helps when local major disasters occur—such as the 2007 fires that caused mass evacuations.

The CERT program offers hands-on training held at Rancho Santa Fe Fire Station #2. Since the program's inception in January, 2005, there have been 240 citizens trained, said Dr. Bernhard Geierstanger, co-chair of the CERT Operations Committee. A new class of about 16 trainees just got underway.

The program is free. It is offered locally to those 18 years of age and above through the fire departments of the three cities of Del Mar, Solana Beach and Encinitas, and the community of Rancho Santa Fe. It comprises a total of 24 hours of training over about four weeks. The curriculum includes such topics as CPR instruction, psychology and terrorism, as well as fire safety and life-saving skills with an emphasis on decision making, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the highest number of people.

"We learn how to take care of ourselves, our family and our neighborhood," said CERT graduate Vickie Driver, a Solana Beach resident, who is also an Operations Commissioner. Along with Linette Page, also a CERT Operations Commissioner, Driver is a presenter of "Are You Ready Solana Beach?", a program which educates neighbors, in their own home about disaster preparedness in a single one-hour presentation. Commissioners Carol Kerridge — who was instrumental in establishing the program — and Mike Mosakowski conduct the same program for Del Mar residents.

For Driver, the CERT training has been invaluable on a community and a personal level. "What it has trained me to do personally is how to be prepared for any emergency, whether it is a fire disaster, an earthquake or a black-out. I have a go-bag filled with vital papers, survival equipment and water. I can throw it in the car and be ready to go at a moment's notice." She understands the importance of stocking supplies like a first-aid kit, a radio and batteries, candles and matches, bottled water and non-perishable food that doesn't need cooking, items critical when there is a power outage.

A goal of each city is to train 1 percent of the community to be prepared for any major disaster, said Driver. The training sessions include emergency re-enactments with hands-on use of fire extinguishers, the search of a three or four-story building and the jacking up of a cement wall to simulate realistic disaster rescue scenarios. Training continues even after graduation to maintain team skills and the working partnership.

"Once a quarter we do activities to get to know other CERT members in our own communities. We are able to practice with who we will be working with in an actual emergency," said Driver.

New trainees are always welcome to enroll in this volunteer program. The CERT Academy runs twice a year. To sign up for next year's training session or to schedule an "Are You Ready?" presentation, call the CERT hotline at (858) 720 4412

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Adagio-Ballet Series

Reception  
Thursday, October 6th

## Artist Bio

John Asaro's recent paintings capture the life force behind dance, his main focus of the series 100 Dancers. With brilliant fauve colors, his admiration for dancers and their dedication is reflected in his own dedication to capturing the lines and forms of the graceful ballerinas.

He follows them from classroom to stage in various poses of relaxation, performance, contemplation, and even the pain that comes with such passion. On stage or in the classroom, the costumes and lighting are constantly shifting, creating delicate tension between the artists and their environment.

Always listening to the orchestral arrangements as he paints, Asaro's inspired works are imbued with music. He occasionally finds himself of the same ilk, and dances around his studio, paintbrush in hand with his patient cat as a partner. It's easy to give yourself up to the captivating essence of dance; John Asaro certainly has.

# Once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire John Asaro Paintings.

Additional Paintings have been added to the exhibition.

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**SOLANA BEACH** — A sheriff's helicopter crew airlifted a woman with a broken leg out of a canyon near San Elijo Lagoon in Solana Beach Thursday, officials said.

The woman and a male companion were hiking when part of a bluff gave way, causing the woman to fall, sheriff's Lt. Mike McCain said. He said they used a cellphone to call for help about 3:15 p.m.

Paramedics hiked down the steep canyon slope off Rios Avenue to treat the woman and prepare her to be hoisted into the helicopter, said Battalion Chief Mike Gibbs of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District. The woman was then flown to a hospital.

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Sheriff's helicopter airlifts woman near Ramona

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Helicopter rescues injured hiker

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