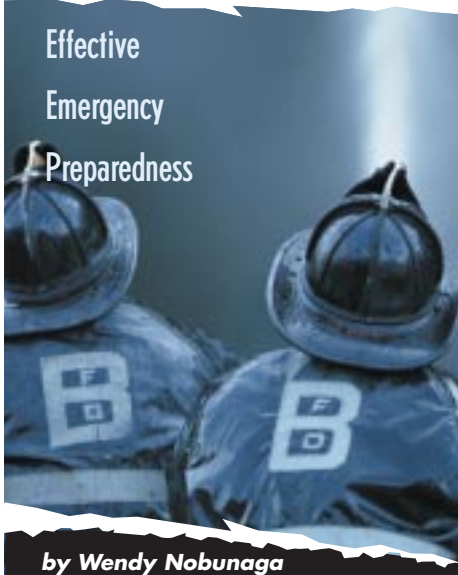


Shattered Shelves

Effective
Emergency
Preparedness



by Wendy Nobunaga

On Tuesday, July 14, **Charles Varnes** (Mount San Antonio College Law Library) and **Robert Genovese** (University of Arizona College of Law Library) made presentations on the steps a library can take to protect itself from disaster. Each emphasized the importance of emergency preparedness in preventing the potential loss a library may suffer when disaster strikes.

Varnes focused on the more general aspects of disaster planning and presented photographs of libraries in the aftermath of earthquakes, tornadoes, and fires. These photographs contained images of fallen shelves, water-damaged books—all the destruction produced by a disaster—as well as the damage caused by the rescue efforts. Genovese spoke about his own personal experience with disaster planning for his library and displayed his library's disaster preparedness manual. Providing us with a copy of his manual's table of contents, he went through each section and highlighted the main points. He ended by expressing his hope that his talk would get us to start thinking about developing our own manual and emergency preparedness program.

Since I have lived through numerous earthquakes, riots, and fires, including the recent Northridge earthquake in 1994, one would think that a program on emergency preparedness would be "old hat" for me. Unfortunately, living in the disaster headquarters of the United States, I tend to view Mother Nature's and man-made catastrophes in a blasé manner. Such disasters are so commonplace to me that I do not always appreciate the need for pre-planning. When I first sat down and listened to the program, I wondered if the information presented would be of

interest to me. Would I already know what was about to be presented? And, if so, how would I stay awake after a night of fun and frolic at the West Party?

First of all the good news...I did stay awake. Was the information presented important? Yes, most definitely. Everyone should know about emergency preparedness and how to take the necessary steps to protect themselves and their surroundings. Was it presented in way that made me want to go out and take the action necessary? Here's the bad news...only to a degree. Of course, I am not asking that the presenters simulate an earthquake or start a fire in the room (though that would have been kinda fun), but it is necessary that a program be presented in a way to motivate the attendees into getting the ball rolling and actively pursuing the topic at hand. This did not happen for me. However, even though I personally did not take the steps necessary in creating an emergency preparedness program, I did inquire about my own library's plan. Perhaps that is all the presenters wanted out of this program, to motivate me into asking the question. If that was their goal, then they succeeded.

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Karen M. Covell



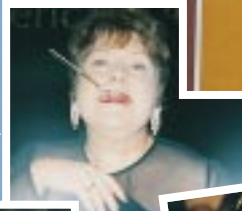
Marc Silverman



Marc Silverman



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