

Civil Air Patrol joins the rescue

By Suzie Rollins Slinger
Staff writer

At 16, Peter Matejcek resembled a seasoned military man when he stood at attention saying "yes, ma'am" more times than the reporter could count.

Cad in fatigues and combat boots, the Bloomfield Hills youth talked about why he joined Oakland County's Civil Air Patrol.

"A couple of years ago, I noticed some guys in green uniforms, and a streak of patriotism ran through me. I'd like to join the U.S. Marines some day, and I thought the CAP was a good place to learn the courtesies and customs of the military," Cadet Warrant Officer Matejcek said.

MATEJCEK, like 450 other Oakland County residents, enlisted in the volunteer U.S. Air Force auxiliary group to assist communities in disasters.

"When there was an aircraft crash in Troy a while ago, local authorities called us to secure the site until FAA officials got there," said Lt. Col. Edward Keen, who oversees the entire county operation.

"When there is a tornado, we pull people out of their homes. We don't have any law enforcement powers. We just help the police and Coast Guard on rescue missions.

The Civil Air Patrol receives no funding from any government agencies or military divisions.

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Membership dues of \$25 for adults and \$9 for cadets helps pay for equipment and uniforms.

Sometimes the Air Force donates excess uniforms. Most of the budget comes from fund-raising drives like car washes and candy sales.

CADETS, whose ages range from 12-20, spend most of their rescue time on the ground helping disaster victims.

Senior members are involved in the aerial portion of search and rescue missions. As in the military, CAP men and women move up the ranks from private to lieutenant colonel with successful scores on leadership and aerospace tests. But unlike the military, they may leave the group whenever they wish.

Training is rigorous. Weekend wilderness expeditions in the heart of winter prepare the youths for

rescues. They live out of backpacks and eat military food. Each 12-person squadron is headed by a cadet who reports to a senior member.

Once a week, the group attends a 2½ hour class in leadership, military procedures and rescue techniques. In Oakland County about 75 percent of the CAP force are cadets and 10 percent are female.

"We'd sure like to have more women. CAP was one of the first organizations to practice non-discrimination policies," Keen said.

Cadet Lt. Col. Keith Hughes, 20, supervises the youth group. He joined CAP in 1977.

"I assist the five cadet squadron commanders and help them relate to the senior committee," said Hughes. "I'm also the catch-all person they (cadets) come to when they have problems."

"I had thought about joining the Boy Scouts because I wanted to get involved in something that could benefit the community. But then I saw an ad on TV for the CAP and decided to join," he added.

Cadet Major Kathleen Netchke, 17, said her brother persuaded her to join CAP. Although she likes the military regimen, she doesn't have any future plans for the armed services.

MANY TIMES CAP members are pulled out of their classrooms to head for disasters throughout the state.

"We go all over. We went up north to help in flood, we've done work in ice storms in Dearborn. We go wherever we're needed," Hughes said.



When an aircraft crashes, Civil Air Patrol cadets are often called to the scene to guard the plane until FAA representatives arrive. A.L. Fox (left) of the National Transportation Safety Board is assisted by cadets Dennis Karp, Kevin Nietzke and James Hubanks.

'Displaced homemakers' invited to OCC seminars

Displaced homemakers are invited to a series of "Self-Improvement Saturdays" at the Royal Oak Campus of Oakland Community College. The two-hour seminars will be held from 10 a.m. to noon through February.

Sessions are free for those who qualify as "homemakers in transition." Others will be charged \$2 per session. All proceeds will be donated to the Southeast Campus Student Activities Fund.

The seminars for displaced homemakers are designed primarily for divorced or widowed women who have either worked as a homemaker, or worked only part time or in unskilled jobs and who now find themselves in the position of having to support themselves.

The Displaced Homemaker Program also admits those women who are in a shaky marriage, those with a terminally ill husband or others who for any reason believe they will one day have to be self-supporting.

An assertiveness training seminar is scheduled for Jan. 22. "Legal Problems" will be stressed on Jan. 30.

Seminar topics for Feb. include "The Job Market: Today and Tomorrow," "How to Construct a Resume and Apply for a Job" and "Dealing with Stress."

To see if you qualify as a homemaker in transition or to reserve a place, call 522-6900, Ext. 259.

Classes aimed at gifted

A series of enrichment courses for academically gifted and talented children will be sponsored by the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College.

The courses are aimed at the interests of children in grades K-12.

Topics include animation, computer programming, advanced calligraphy, cartooning, mime and clowning, knitting, Russian, photography, speed reading and theater.

All classes are open to the public and are on Saturdays.

On-campus registration for the term will be held 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays through Jan. 29. The campus is at Orchard Lake Road and I-696 in Farmington Hills.

For a brochure or registration information call 476-9400, ext. 277 or 226.

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