

RESCUE 1

FOUNDATION

2010

SCRAPBOOK

The attached **2010 Scrapbook** is a detailed retrospective of the **Rescue One Foundation's** legacy and contributions to emergency medical services in Moraga and Orinda. Below is a comprehensive summary:

Summary of the 2010 Scrapbook

◆ Foundation History & Origins

- **Founded in 1977** by **Marion Devin**, the Rescue One Foundation was born from a community need for faster emergency medical response.
 - Inspired by delays in ambulance services in the early 1970s, the **Moraga Service League** and local residents initiated fundraising to purchase a dedicated ambulance for Moraga.
 - The **first ambulance**, a **1972 Dodge van**, was bought through a door-to-door campaign collecting \$1 from each household.
 - Seed money from Ray Devin's memorial contributions (\$25,000) helped formally establish the Foundation.
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◆ Mission and Contributions

- The Foundation supports **Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD)** paramedics through donations of:
 - **CPR and EMT training equipment**
 - **Cardiac monitors and defibrillators (e.g., Lifepak 15)**
 - **Rescue tools like the "Jaws of Life"**
 - **Ambulances and advanced medical devices**
 - **Drones for emergency response and training (UAS)**
 - **Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)** for public spaces
 - Over the decades, Rescue One has contributed **over \$300,000** in lifesaving equipment.
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◆ Community Events and Fundraising

- **Moraga Royale Assisted Living** plays a major role, holding annual fundraisers:
 - **Festival of Trees:** Decorated Christmas trees auctioned to benefit Rescue One.

- **Grandparent's Day:** Proceeds from fun fairs donated to the Foundation.
 - **Other Events:**
 - **Shred Fest:** Document destruction event to support Rescue One.
 - **Fill the Boot:** Firefighters collect donations for muscular dystrophy and community health initiatives.
 - **AED Donations:** Placed in schools, libraries, fitness clubs, churches, and other public spaces.
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◆ **Partnership with MOFD and Local Agencies**

- Rescue One partners with **MOFD, local police, and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)** to:
 - Train officers in AED and CPR use.
 - Deploy AEDs in police cars and community spaces.
 - Equip firefighters with state-of-the-art drones and rescue tech.
 - Also supports **emergency preparedness** and **public health campaigns**.
-

◆ **Recognition & Milestones**

- Celebrated its **40th anniversary in 2017**, recognized by Moraga Town Council.
 - Honored **Darrell Lee**, long-time division chief, for his impact on EMS innovation and as Rescue One liaison.
 - Inspired community stories, including:
 - The rescue and birthday celebration of a child born in a medical emergency.
 - Supporting a child cancer survivor through emotional and financial outreach.
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◆ **Technology & Innovation**

- Donated **LUCAS 2 chest compression systems, LifePack 15s, and high-tech drones** to improve emergency response.
- Equipped **police departments** with AEDs to respond quicker to cardiac emergencies.
- Embraced **PulsePoint app** integration for community CPR response alerts.

Timeline – 2010 Scrapbook

1971

- Concept of paramedic emergency service begins in Moraga under Fire Chief Don Skinner and Fire Commissioner Ray Devin.

1972

- First ambulance (a Dodge van) purchased by the Moraga Service League through a \$1-per-household campaign.
- Service begins responding to life-threatening emergencies.

1974

- Moraga voters approve **Proposition K**, allowing a tax to fund ambulance services and paramedics.

1977–1978

- Rescue One Foundation is founded by **Marion Devin** using \$25,000 in memorial contributions.
- It becomes **California's first nonprofit dedicated to supporting a local fire district's paramedic program.**

2010

- Historical article by Jane Putnam recounts the Foundation's origin and early operations.
- Linda Borelli recounts the near-fatal 25-minute ambulance delay that spurred local action in the 1970s.
- Rescue One's donations exceed **\$300,000**, providing MOFD with equipment like:
 - CPR training tools
 - Paramedic scholarships
 - Defibrillators
 - Jaws of Life

December 2010

- **Festival of Trees** held by **Moraga Royale** raises money for Rescue One despite last-minute sponsor dropouts.
- Trees decorated and auctioned; proceeds go to support MOFD paramedics.

'Rescue One' launched

By JANE PUTNAM

Moragans have always been sentimental about their fire department—particularly the rescue unit.

And so it was a sentimental moment Friday at the Moraga Liaison Committee when Marion Devin, widow of the late fire commissioner Ray Devin, announced the establishment of the Rescue I Foundation.

Secretary of State March Fong Eu certified the establishment of the non-profit Rescue I Foundation, first in California, to aid and support the emergency medical services in our town.

One year in the process, the corporation was started with seed money of \$25,000, left from contributions in Mr. Devin's memory.

Para - medic emergency health care service was conceived in 1971 while Mr. Devin was chairman of the fire commission. Fire chief Don Skinner and former county supervisor James Moriarty were in office.

The officers for Rescue I are: Mrs. Devin, president; Donald E. Anderson, vice president; Yvette Nance, secretary/treasurer; chief Skinner, special consultant.

In 1971, the community, through the Moraga Service League (MSL), approached the district to man a rescue vehicle. Even when Moraga had the old volunteer department, a majority of calls were to respond to emergencies.

The MSL and others cooperated in collecting \$10,000 for the purchase of the vehicle. Some matching funds were granted through the state.

Only "life and death" transports were considered for the new service which started in '71, according to Skinner.

The service grew with the town. In 1974, Proposition K, a local measure to provide para-medics when training became available, was proposed. Moragans voted overwhelming for Proposition K, which allowed a tax of 25 cents per \$100 assessed valuation for the ambulance service.

Full - time transportation became available in 1974 when 87 persons were transported to the hospital by the rescue unit in half - a - year.

According to statistics compiled by Skinner, in 1975, the district had 75 calls for transports but no service was available. In 1971, there were 138 calls of which only 7 were considered life or death; 1972, 190 calls, 13 of which were life or death; and in 1973, 204 calls of which 22 were deemed life or death.

In 1975, when full transportation to the hospital was available, there were 299 calls, with 198 transports; 1976, 377 calls, 233 transports; and 1977, 431 calls, 213 transports.

In 1977, three para - medics were trained, and that service became available on a parttime basis.

This year, a new \$30,000 ambulance is purchased, fully - equipped, for para - medic service. Cost for the personnel (three para - medics and four Emergency Medical Technicians) runs \$150,000 annually, and supplies, \$10,000, Skinner explained.

The para-medics and EMT's are

also available for fire fighting, he added.

With the rising costs of the service, the need for expansion, and the uncertainty of tax revenue due to bills such as the Jarvis - Gann on the June ballot, Mrs. Devin saw the necessity of forming the non - profit corporation. She foresees Rescue I as receiving tax - deductible contributions from many persons who have received aid from the para - medic and/or rescue unit.

The fire district's files are filled with notes of praise from parents and victims whose lives, or that of loved ones, have been saved.

None of the funds collected for Rescue I will go toward political purposes or salaries. Anderson, who helped to draw up the incorporation papers, specified that the prime purpose of Rescue I is to aid and support the training of paramedics and provide emergency medical services.

Although the full - scale drive to gain financial support for Rescue I is just starting, it is a legal entity, and can receive tax - deductible contributions.

They may be sent to the main fire station, 1280 Moraga Way.

In making her announcement, Mrs. Devin said that many Moragans might also like to remember Fire Commissioner Art Fleuti, who died March 23, with a memorial contribution to Rescue I "for all the fun and good cheer at the Moraga Barn."

HH-78 - C.E. Tim Manges

Rescue One

Dedicated to the support of MOFD paramedics

By Lucy Amaral

The concern over emergency medical services and response times may be a hot-button issue right now in Lamorinda, but it's not a new issue.

Founded in 1978, the Moraga-based Rescue One Foundation grew out of the community's desire for quality, effective, local emergency medical service.

In the early 1970's, the Town of Moraga's fire department had several firefighters cross-trained as emergency medical technicians (EMTs), but ambulance transport was provided by outside services.

According to Linda Borelli, board member for the Rescue One

Foundation, having ambulances travel various distances to reach Moraga was always a concern, but it took a near fatality to effect change.

"The husband of a Moraga Service League member suffered an accident at his home. His femoral artery was lacerated," said Borelli. "The response time for an ambulance to arrive from Walnut Creek was 25 minutes, and the travel time to Alta Bates Hospital, another 20 minutes. By the time he arrived at the hospital, he was not breathing and had no pulse. His life was saved only after he received 23 pints of blood."

The Service League members saw the importance of response time in saving a life, added Borelli. Therefore, it was simple: The Town of Moraga needed its own ambulance. After a meeting with (and blessing from) Moraga's then Fire Chief, Don Skinner, the Service League got to work.

"The community came together in fundraising for the ambulance," said Borelli. "A door-to-door campaign by League members was launched and they asked for one dollar from each household. The League raised \$8,000, enough to purchase the ambulance, a new 1972 Dodge van."



The first ambulance for the Moraga Fire District, a 1972 Dodge van, donated by Moraga Service League. L to R: Service League members Carol Porterfield and Jean Scott, two members of the Moraga Fire Commission, League member Jean Kirsch. The two uniformed members of the Moraga Fire District are John Cooper on the left, and Chief Don Skinner on the right. Photo provided

With the van donated to the Fire District, the League took on the new challenge of raising money to help the District purchase the equipment and supplies for the ambulance. Several fundraisers later and the first Moraga Rescue Ambulance was ready to roll.

Watching this was Marian Devin, widow of fire commissioner Ray Devin. Borelli said that with money available from her late husband's memorial fund, Devin approached the fire district and the Service League to see if a separate foundation could be formed to continue the support the rescue services. "She spearheaded the Foundation's formation," said Borelli. In 1978, with Devin's original donation, all the official paper work complete, and a seven-member

board made up of Service League members and community leaders, the Rescue One Foundation was born, becoming California's first foundation dedicated entirely to supporting its local fire district and paramedic program.

Support of the Foundation was immediate. "People started contributing (right away)," said Borelli. "We have never had to fundraise. Service organizations continue to donate, and there have been gifts of appreciation as well as in memoriam."

Over the past 30 years, the Foundation has received more than \$300,000 in donations, allowing Rescue One to donate items including CPR training equipment, paramedic training scholarships, cardiac monitors, defibrillators,

and emergency equipment such as the "Jaws of Life."

Today, Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) ambulances may be state-of-the-art rather than retrofitted vans, but the dedication from Rescue One remains the same: Support MOFD paramedics.

"The Rescue One Foundation's support of MOFD over the past 33 years has been tremendous," said Randy Bradley, MOFD Fire Chief. "The Foundation understands the importance of providing superior paramedic and ambulance services to the communities of Moraga, Orinda and Canyon. The donations have allowed the District to go above and beyond basic service levels that are offered elsewhere."

Festival of Trees Nearly Falls

Lamorinda weekly
12/8/10

By Sophie Braccini



Dianne Wilson with her dog Ranger

Dianne Wilson couldn't help but feel proud at the sight of seven decorated Christmas trees, ready to be auctioned, in the side lobby of Moraga Royale. The Festival of Trees fundraising event that Wilson, the Executive Director of the assisted living facility, started planning last July almost didn't happen — three days before the opening date most of her corporate sponsors bailed out.

Accomplishing a real tour-de-force, supported by staff, residents and their families, as well as two remaining sponsors (CVS Pharmacy and Hospice of the East Bay), Wilson managed to get all of her trees decorated and generously complete with gifts. The silent

auction started on December 1st closed on December 7th. All proceeds will go to the Rescue One Foundation, the organization that supports Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) paramedics.

"MOFD comes here twice a month on average," explains Wilson, "they are always very professional and kind, and their equipment, some of which was purchased with Rescue One donations, saves lives." State law requires that the facility call them if a resident falls and bumps his/her head, even if it is a minor fall. Every time it happens, Wilson says, she gets the same graciousness and quality of service from MOFD.

"We are doing this for our residents, too," adds Wilson,

Photo Ohlen Alexander. "they enjoyed the whole process as well as coming here and seeing the trees." Wilson explains that some of the older residents do not feel confident venturing outside of the grounds and really appreciate activities and new entertainment on site.

Moraga Royale, a retirement community of over 80 residents, is located at the corner of Country Club Drive and Canyon. About 18 of the patients are part of the dementia unit that's separate from the rest of the grounds. "We take these residents for a visit to the trees every day," says Wilson, "and they enjoy it every time."

It was the first time that such an auction was organized in Moraga. "I feel that this is

only a beginning and that this fundraising event has the potential to become bigger and maybe include a dinner and/or a fashion show," says Wilson. For a first time, the display was quite impressive. Wilson added a 'donation boot' from MOFD where visitors could just contribute a few dollars to their favorite fire department.

Reflecting on what happened with the donors that fell short of their promises, Wilson concluded, "It's like what is happening in the world, it's the small, local people that are making it happen."



Moraga Royale Supports Rescue One

By Sophie Braccini

1/5/11
Lamorinda Weekly



From left: Fire Chief Randall Bradley (holding the new Lifepak 15), Linda Borelli, Gene Gottfried, and Dianne Wilson
Photo Andy Scheck

"I was astonished when Dianne (Wilson) gave us a check for \$2,700.00," said Rescue One Foundation Board Member Linda Borelli. Wilson, the executive director of Moraga Royale, an assisted living facility, spearheaded the facility's Christmas tree auction to benefit Rescue One. "This will be a great help in our fundraising efforts," stated Borelli.

Established in 1977, the Rescue One Foundation receives and administers contributions in support of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) paramedic program; over the last 33 years, Rescue One has contributed \$300,000 worth of equipment to MOFD.

Rescue One's latest purchase is a new monitor/defibrillator called the Lifepak 15. MOFD is the first fire district in the East Bay to get the newer, lighter unit. "This unit checks 15 different vital signs and transfers the information directly to the emergency room even before the emergency vehicle reaches its destination," explained Borelli. "Rescue One was very proud to finance one of these units for MOFD a month ago. We hope to get a second unit in the near future, and Moraga Royale's donation will help us get there."

Police put heart into new training

By Emille Karrick
STAFF WRITER

Local police officers are bringing new meaning to the age-old adage "to protect and serve."

As of this week, officers in the Moraga and Orinda police departments have the tools and training that will enable them to revive heart attack victims.

Joining forces with paramedics from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the two police departments are the first law enforcement agencies in the county to carry automatic external defibrillators (AED). When police officers respond first to a heart attack, they will be able to sustain the patient during critical life-saving minutes.

"Every minute that goes by when somebody's not breathing and has no pulse, you're looking at 10 percent less chance of survival," said paramedic-engineer Darrell Lee. "They have the tools to use and it will help us make a difference in the patient's survival."

Lee and Moraga resident Ben Ho — recently appointed as the new Moraga-Orinda fire board member — conducted training for all members of both police departments. Officers learned that if they are able to sustain the "chain of survival," they may be able to resuscitate a victim who minutes before was a nonbreather.

This chain of survival starts the moment a call for help is made. Upon arrival to a scene where the patient has no pulse and is not breathing, CPR will help temperate a heart that is in fibrillation — chaotic rhythm caused by extensive damage to the heart muscle.

If defibrillation — electric shock that sends the heart back into its normal rhythm — is started within seven minutes or less, chance of survival is 20 percent and greater. However, that shock must be administered within 10 minutes if it is to be effective at all.

"Electricity shocks (the heart), wakes it up and starts it beating again," Ho explained. "We try to get electricity to the heart sooner

and sooner."

Ho, a Moraga reserve police officer, first raised the possibility of such a program. After a year's worth of conversations between the two police chiefs, the fire chief, both city councils, the fire board, the police association, county Emergency Medical Services and Rescue One foundation — it was launched.

Four of the AEDs are on loan from the fire district, while Rescue One donated the \$3,000 cost of the fifth. The machines to be used by police officers (three in Orinda and two in Moraga) have been deemed "idiot-proof," with play by play instructions once the electrodes are attached to the patient's chest. Everything from when to do CPR and whether or not a shock is advised is dictated by the machine.

"At first we were a little leery because we're not paramedics or anything, but it seems like it's really easy," said Moraga Officer Randy Dickey. "We're excited to get a call, so that we can actually get out there

See AEDs, Page 2



Orinda Detective Craig Cooper attaches contacts to an automatic external defibrillator during training last Thursday with firefighter-paramedic Felipe Barretto, right, and Moraga Officer Julie Valdez.

and help someone."

Both Lee and Ho emphasized that while having AEDs on board gives the officers one more tool, it should in no way compromise their role as public safety officers. A police officer's first priority is to make sure a scene is safe and secure — before administering to an injured party.

"It doesn't change what our responsibility is," said Orinda Sgt. Chris Wenzel. "The bottom line is we're emergency personnel and our main purpose is to secure a situation."

Orinda Police Chief Dan Lawrence added that the program will be implemented no differently than the current protocol an officer follows when performing CPR on other types of first aid. If an officer is able to arrive on scene faster than fire personnel, they will respond. However, if forced to choose between a bank robbery and a medical emergency, for example, officers will go to the former because they know that fire personnel will eventually respond to the latter.

"It's not that we're taking the place of anybody," said Moraga Officer Mark Ruppenthal. "If those golden minutes can be attained and somebody can be saved, isn't that what police and fire, public safety is all about?"

MORAGA, ORINDA

MOFD receives donation

Lamorinda Sun 2/10/12

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District has received a \$2,000 donation from the Rescue One Foundation using money raised by the Moraga Royale assisted living facility.

The donation was the result of the Moraga Royale's "Festival of Trees," a yearly auction of themed trees decorated by residents, local businesses and organizations. Proceeds from the auction benefit Rescue One, which donates funds to the fire district for the purchase of lifesaving equipment.

Last year, the district used Rescue One funds for the purchase of a new chest compression device for administering CPR and a defibrillator.

Moraga Royale Supports Rescue One

Submitted by Michael Mentink

*2/15/12
Lamorinda Weekly*



Left to right: Jared Costanza, Matt Epperson, Jacob Airola, Greg Reams, Dianne Wilson, Julie Fischer, Mark DeWeese, Mike Rattary Photo provided

On Tuesday, January 24, Dianne Wilson of Moraga Royale presented Rescue One Foundation President, Greg Reams, with a donation of \$2,000, the proceeds of their annual "Festival of Trees" silent auction fundraiser.

Each year, Moraga Royale sponsors the Festival of Trees

event to benefit Rescue One, a non-profit organization dedicated to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and emergency medical services in the Moraga and Orinda area. The trees are provided by Moraga Royale and decorated by local businesses, organizations and residents. The themed trees and accompanying gift packages

were purchased through a silent auction that ended on December 15, 2011.

"The Rescue One Foundation has been an invaluable benefit to the District and has donated funds for the District to purchase life-saving equipment for use by our firefighters" Said MOFD Fire Chief Randall Bradley, "and support of the community and organizations like Moraga Royale helps Rescue One continue their good works."

In the past year, the Rescue One Foundation donated the funds for the District to purchase a new Lucas 2 Chest Compression Device used in administering CPR and a LifePack 15 Defibrillator. Both of these devices are carried on the District's advanced life support ambulances.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District would like to thank Moraga Royale and our community for their continued support of the Rescue One Foundation.

Lamorinda Weekly
Moraga 2/24/12

"Shred Fest" event, Saturday, March 3 at 455 Moraga Rd., 10am-1pm. Protect yourself from identity theft by safely destroying your unwanted documents containing personal data. The event is held in conjunction with 5A Rent-A-Space and the E-Waste Event. In addition, you will receive a free complimentary guide on record retention requirements, "How long do I have to keep what records?" Sponsored by Hall of Taxes. All net proceeds will go to Rescue One Moraga which supports the Moraga/Orinda Fire District. \$5 per bankers box. For more information call Peggy Hall at (925) 388-1040.

Shred Fest a Success

Submitted by Peggy Hall

Lamorinda
Weekly 3/28/12



Photo provided

The March 3 Shred Fest sponsored by Hall of Taxes raised \$301 for the Rescue One Foundation which supports the MOFD by purchasing needed equipment. Hall of Taxes joined forces with 5A Rent-A-Space and Neighborhood Computers to help Lamorinda households rid themselves of e-waste and important personal documents. The response to the Shred

Fest was so favorable that Hall of Taxes plans to sponsor the event again on June 3. Picture from left Linda Borelli and Greg Reams (from Rescue One Foundation), Grant Stubblefield (Neighborhood Computers), Peggy Hall (Hall of Taxes), and Brad Noggle (5 A Rent-A-Space). To be put on the notification list, call Hall of Taxes at (925) 388-1040.

"Grandparent's Day" Helps Rescue One

Submitted by Jessica McCormick

Lamorinda Weekly 10/10/12



From left, Loto Rickman, Katy Himsl, Al Pyne, Dan Johanson, Greg Reams, Jessica McCormick and Chris Davies. Photo provided

On Thursday, September 27 staff from Moraga Royale presented Rescue One Foundation President Greg Reams with a donation of \$1,000, the proceeds of Moraga Royale's annual

"Grandparent's Day" celebration. Moraga Royale's Grandparent's Day, which was held on September 8, provided food, drinks, snowcones, pony rides, a petting zoo, and a dunk tank that benefited the

Rescue One Foundation. Al Pyne, Loto Rickman, and Jessica McCormick, all staff of Moraga Royale, braved the cold water to raise money for this great cause. In two hours they raised \$500 and Moraga Royale matched that donation amount, giving Rescue One \$1,000 in total. Rescue One is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and emergency medical services in the Moraga and Orinda area. Donors like Moraga Royale have made possible the purchase of vital items such as CPR training equipment, heavy rescue equipment, and cardiac monitors/defibrillators. Reams thanked Moraga Royale for its kind donation and for always remembering Rescue One.

MOFD in the Pink for Cancer

By Cathy Dausman

*10/24/12
Lamorinda Weekly*



Back row, from left: Jared Costanza, Sr., Matt Epperson, Mark DeWeese, Jacob Airola, and Mike Rattary. Front row: Angela Davison-Lee, Grace Santos, Nancy Amino-Lee, Kim Kennedy, and Isabella Kennedy. Photo Cathy Dausman

Moraga Orinda Fire District employees and their supporters are on fire this month... and

all for a good cause. The firefighters are promoting October's Breast Cancer Awareness month by wear-

ing pink t-shirts emblazoned with the district logo and selling them to the public. Proceeds from the sales benefit the Susan G. Komen foundation. MOFD Firefighter Mike Marquardt brought 300 shirts through the International Association of Firefighters Local 1230 to sell at the Moraga Fire Station 41 open house October 13. Marquardt said shirts are available "until we run out," during regular business hours at Fire Station 43, 20 Via Las Cruces, Orinda. "Last year we had only two [shirts] left over," Marquardt said. "We get a lot of requests from the local hospitals for t-shirts. It's usually individuals in the ERs asking after seeing [emergency] personnel wearing them."

In November MOFD turns its focus to prostate cancer awareness.

Civic News Fire Department

MOFD Volunteer Awards

Lamorinda Weekly
6/18/14



Photo Dennis Rein

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District recognized its volunteers at a June 12 ceremony at the Hacienda de las Flores. Honorees included the Community Emergency Response Team, the Rescue One Foundation and CS-245, the district's communications support group. Kneeling, from left: Division chief Darrell Lee and Fire Chief Stephen Healy. *N. Marnell*



Transfer of Command at MOFD

Lamorinda Weekly
6/2/14

By Nick Marnell



MOFD's Darrell Lee and his wife Nancy, with daughters Kelsey and Priscilla, after his retirement presentation June 18. Photo N. Marnell

He arrived on the scene in 1984 in his Angels Flight pants and flip flops, according to Gil Caravantes, captain with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. And on June 27, division chief Darrell Lee punched out of Moraga-Orinda Fire District station 45 for the final time in his firefighting career. Some of the people whose lives Lee impacted over those 30 years shared their feelings about the retired division chief.

"He's been my friend since 1995," said John Wyro, MOFD board president. "Whenever you needed help, Darrell was there." Wyro reflected on the many programs Lee implemented that improved pre-hospital patient care, notably the 12-lead electrocardiogram procedure which he instituted in the district in 1997.

He provided logistical and communication support at Ground Zero. Lee later became a founding member of the Department of Homeland Security.

Directors and staff and the rank and file recognized Lee's helpful, easy going manner. "Darrell Lee has as much institutional knowledge and enthusiasm for the fire service as anyone the district has ever had working here," said Mark DeWeese, MOFD labor representative.

Fire district volunteers shared that sentiment as well. "This community has been very fortunate to have Darrell as a member of our fire district all these years," said Gordon Nathan, past MOFD director and president of the Rescue One Foundation. "Darrell has been the district's liaison to Res-

New AEDs for MOFD Area

By Cathy Dausman

Lamorinda Weekly 5/1/14



Darrell Lee with AED Lifepak

Photo Cathy Dausman

Eight new automated external defibrillators valued in excess of \$20,000 were delivered to the Moraga and Orinda police departments, four each, during presentations at two recent council meetings. An AED is a portable device that can be used for treatment during sudden cardiac arrest (heart attack). It produces a shock if needed to help restore the heart to normal rhythm. The Lifepak model 1000 AEDs were a gift from Rescue One Foundation.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District division chief Darrell Lee addressed

the Moraga Town Council at its April 23 meeting. "When I started as a paramedic 34 years ago, there was no AED," he said. Then in 1997 MOFD paramedics began the first county partnership with local law enforcement officers in Moraga and Orinda, offering AED training. Since then Lamorinda police have used the AEDs on many occasions, and two Moraga police officers are credited with using an AED to help save the life of a cardiac arrest victim.

... continued on page A16

New AEDs for MOFD Area

... continued from page A9

"I am extremely thankful for the donation," said Moraga's police chief, Bob Priebe, in email comments. "The technologically upgraded AEDs will help us continue to serve our community and save lives. With the one documented AED life-saving incident experienced by MPD, we know the value of this incredible tool," he added.

Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel added his thanks to Rescue One. "On some occasions, police are first to respond on a call involving sudden cardiac arrest," Nagel said via email. "Every minute that passes increases the likelihood of brain damage or death to the victim. It's reassuring that officers have state of the art equipment allowing them to apply life saving measures as soon as possible," he said.

Rescue One president Gordon Nathan was at Lee's side during the Moraga presentation. "It takes a while to raise that kind of money," Nathan said, but "it was a real pleasure" making the donation.

AEDs are now available in public places throughout Lamorinda. Pulse Point lists more than 50 AEDs located at sites that include

schools, churches, libraries, fitness clubs, and businesses. Many of those organizations have more than one unit. Using an AED now is simple because the machine talks its user through the entire process, step by step, and volunteers can be alerted when their help is needed by subscribing to the PulsePoint app. When paramedics are dispatched to treat a heart attack victim a notification is sent to CPR-trained PulsePoint subscribers willing to assist via their smartphones. Notifications are only made if the victim is in a public place and only to potential rescuers in the immediate vicinity,

primarily within walking distance.

The LP 1000 AEDs are equipped with the newest operating protocols and energy delivery and are particularly suited to survive rough handling in the field, but the older AED models are still serviceable. Now that the police departments have new AEDs, the older devices will be placed at locations around Lamorinda that are currently without an AED. Lee considers the older AEDs "placeholders," to be used until additional funds can be raised and more new models can be purchased.

Learn to use an AED; watch this YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt1bTe_fGTE.

Rescue One, established in 1977, is California's first citizen-inspired foundation working to support a fire district/paramedic program. To learn more about Rescue One, visit <http://www.mofd.org/about/rescueone>.

PulsePoint <http://pulsepoint.org/app/#sthash.UUe5Qowi.dpuf> is available for download in the Apple App Store or in Android Apps on Google Play.

(Read the related article about the PulsePoint app in our archive, <https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/Issue0720/Information-Age-Emergency-Monitoring.html>.)

Lamorinda AED Locations

- Acalanes High School (3)
- Acalanes Union High School District
- 24 Hour Fitness, Moraga
- California Insurance Center
- Campolindo High School (4)
- Canyon Post Office
- Lafayette Community Center (3)
- Core Kinetics, Orinda
- EBMUD (5)
- Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
- Lafayette Care Center
- Miramonte High School (3)
- Moraga Country Club (2)
- Moraga Police Department
- Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church
- Oakwood Athletic Club (3)
- Orinda Community Center
- Orinda Country Club (5)
- Orinda Library
- Orinda Senior Village
- Orinda Woods
- Pine Grove Office Complex (3)
- St. Mary's College (4)
- St. Monica Catholic Church
- St. Perpetua Catholic Church (2)
- Temple Isaiah
- Town Hall Theater
- Wagner Ranch School

(Partial list; information provided by PulsePoint)



Photo Cathy Dausman

Moraga *Lamorinda Weekly* 11/18/15
Moraga Library Gets an AED

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, Jay Ingram, Ann Miller and Greg Eames
Photo Sophie Braccini

Automated External Defibrillators save lives. This is why the Town of Moraga would like to see AED devices installed anywhere a lot of people gather, such as at the Moraga Library where a defibrillator was installed Sept. 25. "We are extremely grateful to the Rescue One Foundation for buying this device," said Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, who is in charge of public facilities. Police cars and paramedic vehicles are already outfitted with AEDs, and there is one at the Hacienda de las Flores. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District trained library personnel to use the device. "The machine tells you exactly

what to do," said Ann Miller, Moraga's new children's librarian who feels empowered now that she knows how to use the AED. Dr. Eugene Gottfried, board member of the Rescue One Foundation, explained that with this machine people can start saving lives right now. "When a heart stops, seconds count," he said. Battalion Chief Jerry Lee added that recently a defibrillator was used with great success on an Orinda city employee who collapsed. Rescue One president Greg Eames said that the more money the foundation raises, the more units they will be able to gift to the cities of Moraga and Orinda.

MOFD Open House and Pancake Breakfast Benefits Burn Foundation

Firefighters of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District helped raise over \$1,235 for the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation at the district's Oct. 3 Open House and Pancake Breakfast in Moraga. Samantha Zepeda from the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation accepts the \$1,235 check from MOFD firefighter-paramedic Matt Lopez. N. Marnell



Photo Stephen Healy, MOFD

MOFD Crew Celebrates Future Firefighter's 4th Birthday

By Nick Marnell

1/25/17



Seated, from left, Capt. Steve Gehling, engineer-paramedic Jon Ford, birthday boy Vivek Rathod; Standing, from left, firefighter-paramedic Anthony Stephens, Capt. Sean McGee, Chandni Rathod, Sameer Rathod.

Photo N. Marnell

Not infrequently, kids receive birthday presents of firefighter helmets, fire engine puzzles or books about the fire service. In the case of 4-year old Vivek Rathod, he received those gifts from Moraga-Orinda Fire District

firefighters at a birthday party they threw for him at Fire Station 45 in Orinda.

On Jan. 13, 2013, Capt. Sean McGee led his crew of MOFD firefighters and paramedics on a childbirth response call to Stanton Avenue

in Orinda. "If you guys were even a minute or two later..." said Sameer Rathod, Vivek's dad. Capt. Steve Gehling, then a firefighter-paramedic, delivered Vivek in the bedroom at 10:17 p.m. and the crew rushed the baby and his mom to the hospital for follow-up care.

"(Vivek) knows the whole story," said Chandni Rathod, Vivek's mother. "He's passionate about firefighters. He thinks of Station 45 as his second home." Vivek constantly talks about coming to the fire station, because he wants to stop and "see my friends," she said.

Vivek received a fire station command performance on Jan. 16, including gifts, cupcakes, a fire engine tour and even a special session with Gehling on how to use the fire hose.

"Most of the time, we pick the moms up and take them to the hospital," said Gehling, who noted the singularity of Rathod's situation. The captain has delivered nine babies in the field throughout his career, so he was the right person on duty the night of the Rathod emergency medical call.

"We are still very grateful," said Sameer Rathod.

Donation to Rescue One Foundation

Submitted by Greg Reams

La Morinda Weekly 2/11/15



From left, FF/PM Lucas Lambert, Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, Rescue One President Gordon Nathan, FF/PM Matt Lopez, Sally and Brad Whittaker, parents of Reed Whittaker, Capt./PM Sean McGee, and Rescue One Director Greg Reams.

Photo Gene Gottfried

A memorial donation of \$13,000 was received by Rescue One Foundation from the family and friends of Reed Austin Whittaker, formerly of Moraga, who passed away in December 2013. Reed, who was 29 years old,

died in a tragic automobile incident while en route to Highland Hospital, where he worked as an Emergency Room Technician.

The donated funds were used to purchase a LUCAS 2 Chest Compression System for the Moraga-

Orinda Fire District. The Rescue One Foundation is a volunteer organization supporting the paramedic program of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. For information, visit <http://www.mofd.org/about/rescueone>.

Young Cancer Patient Impacts MOFD Firefighter

By Nick Marnell



Finley Brown, 6, and MOFD firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert at the Oct. 3 MOFD open house. Photo courtesy Moraga-Orinda Fire District

A 6-year old girl marched up to the fire engine parked at the Moraga Pear Festival, dragging her brother and babysitter directly toward firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert. "Some kids are shy, some are hesitant, but not her," said Lambert, staffing the Moraga-Orinda Fire District apparatus on display that day. "She certainly got all of our attention."

Finley Brown introduced herself to the crew and she explained in detail what she had gone through this year. "She told us about a cancer operation she underwent that removed a tumor the size of a baseball from her kidney," said Lambert. "And she showed us her scars as she freely discussed the whole process." Finley was diagnosed with cancer three days after her 6th birthday in June. She has completed all of her radiation treatments and is undergoing six months of chemotherapy.

"I was thinking, this little girl has been going through hell, and was still smiling, not a care in the world," said Lambert. "It didn't slow her down one bit."

"We teach our kids that, whenever you see a police officer, a firefighter, a soldier, you thank them for

keeping you safe," said her mom, A.J. Brown, who works at the Moraga California Academy of Performing Arts, where Finley dances. "She is well-spoken, and she went right up to the guys and told them what was happening."

So rapt was the MOFD crew that they organized a fundraiser, Dinner for Finley, to help raise money for the Brown family to go on a trip to Disneyland Park after Finley completes her cancer treatments. The MOFD Professional Firefighters Association is sponsoring a raffle of a dinner for up to six at fire station 44 on Saturday, Dec. 12. Tickets cost \$5 each or five for \$20, and they may be purchased at any of the five district fire stations. The association, with the support of the district, hopes to raise \$1,500 for the family.

When he delivered a firefighters' calendar to Finley at her home, Lambert sprung another surprise. Provided he obtains all authorizations, Lambert told Finley that the crew plans to transport her to her final chemotherapy treatment Dec. 21 in a district emergency vehicle.

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Young Cancer Patient Impacts MOFD Firefighter

... continued from page A1

The confident, self-assured young girl nearly jumped to the ceiling.

"I wouldn't have thought that going to chemo could be that ex-

citing for anyone," said Brown.

Cancer is a disease emblazoned in firefighters' psyches. A 2014 study released by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reported that firefighters experienced a higher rate of cancer than the rest of the population, often caused by the flame-retardant chemicals in the gear designed to protect them.

"It's a lot for a little one to go through," said Brown. "Her little brother is experiencing this, too. When we take Finley to the hospital, he misses mommy, and he wants his sister home." She said that Finley's cancer is treatable, with a 90 percent survival rate.

"It's not like you can opt out," continued Brown. "You step up and perform. And you marvel at the number of lives she is touching."

None likely touched more than the firefighter who delivered Finley and her brother a custom set of firefighters' turnout gear.

"Fireman Lucas is my friend," she said. "He's kind and he does

really nice things for us."

"As if we didn't have enough

reasons to love firefighters already," said Brown.



At the Brown residence, top row, from left: engineer-paramedic Matt Epperson, firefighter-paramedic Jared Costanza, captain Mike Rattary and firefighter-paramedic Dave Iman; bottom row: Cooper Brown, Finley Brown and firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert

New Medic Units for Moraga-Orinda Fire District



From left, Daryle Balao captain-paramedic; Matt Lopez firefighter-paramedic; Chris Davies engineer; Vince Matulich captain-paramedic; Tim Williams engineer; Lucas Lambert firefighter-paramedic; Anthony Grgurevic firefighter; Lucas Trumpf firefighter-paramedic. Photo Andy Scheck

Two new International TerraStar medic units, designed by Leader Ambulance in Los Angeles, were placed in service May 1 by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. "We

responded to complaints about an uncomfortable ride, and the fact that the old ambulances were not properly designed for our roads," said firefighter-paramedic Matt Lopez of the

district apparatus committee. "We chose and designed ambulances to give us the longest service life and requiring the least amount of maintenance." —N. Marnell

MOFD Holds Open House to Mark Wildfire Prevention

By Nick Marnell

To recognize National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District will hold its biannual Open House May 14 at Station 45 in Orinda Village.

MOFD firefighters, staff and management, plus representatives of outside agencies like Pacific Gas and Electric and the East Bay Municipal Utility District — and yes,

Smokey the Bear, too — will be on hand to explain what they can do to help you prevent wildfires.

"With all of the rain we've had this season, it's never too early to work on your weed abatement," said MOFD fire marshal Kathy Leonard, and she will tell you everything you need to know to protect your property from wildfires — and to avoid receiving a nasty letter from the district in late June because of out-of-control weeds.

Firefighters, decked out in their wildland gear, will pull out the Type 3 engine, a shorter, squatter vehicle used to fight wildfires and seldom seen traversing the streets of Moraga and Orinda. They will explain the differences between the Type 3 and the regular engine, and demonstrate the special equipment the Type 3 carries.

But the event will not be all work.

"It's a great time for everyone," Leonard said. "The firefighters love meeting the kids." And there will be plenty for the kids to do, includ-



Future firefighters try out the driver's seat.

Photo courtesy MOFD

ing seemingly every small child's dream: to sit in a fire engine.

Firefighter David Mazaika will bring his super-customized grill to station 45 and cook links and dogs and burgers, with all proceeds for the barbeque going to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Even the Contra Costa County Animal Services Department will set up, showcasing cats and dogs available for adoption. Agency representative Steve Burdo promises a

reduced adoption fee for all attendees.

"Let's break the Orinda open house record of 500 this year!" said district clerk Grace Santos, who organizes this event as well as the Moraga Open House and Pancake Breakfast during National Fire Prevention week in the fall.

The event runs from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, May 14 at MOFD Station 45, located at 33 Orinda Way in Orinda Village.

Rescue One Foundation Donates AED to Commons

By Cathy Dausman

6/1/16 Lamorinda Weekly



Showing off the new AED are, from left MOFD Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, Steve Strand of Rescue One, Gene Gottfried, Rescue One President, Mayor Mike Metcalf, Interim Town Manager Robert Priebe and Gordon Nathan of Rescue One.

Moraga now has another Automated External Defibrillator thanks to a donation from Moraga-Orinda Fire District's Rescue One Foundation.

The latest unit was installed inside the kitchen adjacent the band shell at Moraga Commons Park. The portable device is used to treat victims of sudden cardiac arrest. Last fall Rescue One donated an AED to the Moraga library; they also donated a total of eight AEDs to the Moraga and Orinda police departments in 2014.

Hacienda de las Flores and the SODA Aquatic Center at Campolindo High School also have AEDs, although those were not Rescue One purchases.

"Knowing now that the town will have a dedicated AED for large community events at The Commons is extremely important," said Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram. "On behalf of the town, thank you for continuing to make Moraga a safe place to live, work, play and rescue," he said.



6/16
MOFD volunteer appreciation dinner



Embracing drone use for safety

Technology a boost for training, but loss of privacy still a concern

By Lou Fancher

Correspondent

Unmanned aerial drones and robots are third-generation offspring of the PC. After unlimited data and global communications flowed through personal computers, they jumped

to mobile devices.

Arguably, the exploration of hands-free technology has traveled fastest in military and public safety sectors.

Members of Lamorinda CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), tech experts and officials involved in disaster response and recovery heard about robotics, satellites, drones and other new technologies at a recent presentation at the Orinda Library.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire Dis-

INFORMATIONAL LINKS

www.lamorindacert.org
www.mofd.org
www.calvoad.org/contracosta-voad

trict is in the early stages of developing the program for their newly acquired DJI, Inspire 1 UAS (Unmanned Aerial System), a quadcopter with a camera capable of recording 4K videos and shooting 16MP images.

The drone was purchased at no direct cost to the fire district through a grant from the Rescue One Foundation. CERT's interest in drones and robotics moves in tandem with the MOFD's: both organizations strive to be proactive when it comes to public safety.

According to Dennis Rein, MOFD emergency preparedness coordinator, possible departmental use of the quadcopter includes creating firefighter training videos, documenting district assets and events, and assisting with fire investigation documentation.

Additional uses may address vegetation mapping for hazard reduction sites and other applications.

"At this time, there is no intent to utilize the equipment as part of an ongoing emergency operation (or) use it to fly over private property," writes Rein in an email.

At the presentation, guest speaker Rick Palmer, president of Contra Costa VOAD ("Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters") brought project management experience and

component manufacturing knowledge from his 40-year career in the aerospace, pharmaceutical and semiconductor industries.

After retiring 15 years ago, Palmer became involved with the Red Cross and other volunteer disaster response agencies.

Before explaining new technologies and outlining projections of what disaster response will look like 10 years in the future, Palmer referenced a "60 Minutes" broadcast, "The Coming Swarm." It featured Perdix, an autonomous microdrone that Palmer said is "the future" and indicates a direction in which disaster relief agencies are moving.

Perdix was developed by MIT Lincoln Labs and demonstrated on the broadcast at China Lake Weapons Station in California.

A swarm of 100 drones traveled at such velocity that high-speed cameras were needed to film them. They flocked and flew in tighter formation than was possible for pilots of the three F-18 jet fighters that launched the swarm — and communicated seamlessly with each other, despite being physically unmanned.

Like the robots being used and developed further by the military to detect

and dismantle explosives without putting troops at risk — and Sea Hunter, the Navy's autonomous ship that is run by 36 computers and has no crew onboard — problem-solving without loss of life is new technologies' central goal.

Along with improving capabilities for surveillance comes a loss of privacy, as one person in the audience called "the overarching issue" and asked Palmer to address.

"It's huge," Palmer agreed. "It's in everything we're talking about. Trying to regulate tech: How do you do that? They've got to figure it out."

Included with privacy matters are concerns about safety, he said, providing an example of packages dropped by drones into backyards where a dog might be injured.

Although people worried about privacy often illogically share unequivocally on social media platforms, Palmer said that even experiencing a disaster doesn't shift people's perception that a loss of privacy due to drones is concerning.

Disasters also don't reduce — and likely increase — public interest in the new technologies, if the "oohs" uttered by people at Palm-

er's presentation are taken as evidence.

From drones capable of lifting 35 pounds to the 1.2 million (unregulated) drones sold during the 2016 holiday shopping season to those interfering with disaster rescues but also providing medical supplies to isolated clinics, Palmer illustrated the technology's good-bad equations.

"Disasters are impetus to develop new technology," he said, introducing Big Dog, a four-legged robot that carries supplies and runs uphill at 29 mph.

There are improved GPS systems and apps that track water levels and alert people to impending floods; a human-model robot originally created for DARPA's Robotics Challenge that drives a utility vehicle, opens doors, operates valves and tools and walks through rubble; and satellites whose cost is plummeting.

"Everything is driving to better, cheaper, faster," he said.

The next frontier for new technology will be developing laws and standards, according to Palmer. Without proper regulation, an updated saying applies: We are in danger of the unmanned cart running well ahead of the horse.

Ten years of fire reporting in Lamorinda

By Nick Marnell



Finley Brown, 6, and MOFD firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert ride in a fire engine on the way to her last round of chemo on Dec. 21, 2015.

The Lamorinda Weekly made an early commitment to cover the local fire districts, and the paper boasts a fully dedicated fire beat writer, the only newspaper in the Bay Area to do so.

"Emergency service is a very important aspect of our community, and I understand the role of our fire departments," said publisher Andy Scheck, whose father worked for the fire service in Germany and who at 15 became a volunteer firefighter himself.

Our first fire article appeared on May 16, 2007. Cathy Tyson wrote about fire safety and defensible space, quoting Tonya Hoover, Moraga-Orinda Fire District fire marshal, and Contra Costa County Fire Protection District fire inspector Robert Davis. The first printed words from a Lamorinda fire offi-

cial read, "We believe we all share in the responsibility for our fire safety," and that challenge imparted by Hoover rings as true today as 10 years past.

Andrea Firth, the original Orinda beat writer, pushed management to include more fire reporting, and she wrote occasional articles over the first two years, mostly about MOFD. The blockbuster story during her tenure — and of the past 10 years — was the Pete Nowicki pension spiking fallout. After the board miscalculated the fire chief's pension based on incorrect information he submitted, the result cost the district millions of dollars and made MOFD the national poster child for public pension abuse. Firth explained the situation clearly and without hysterics.

Regular fire reporting took

off after Lucy Amaral succeeded Firth in 2009. With regular reporting came more thorough district coverage, including topics like the botched purchase of an administration building on Moraga Way, the confrontation between MOFD and the Orinda Fire and Infrastructure Renewal citizens group and the resignation of two directors after the board renewed the contract of Fire Chief Randall Bradley.

Amaral retired in 2012 and yours truly took over the fire beat. Coverage increased from regular to consistent, with two to three articles per issue, including more ConFire reporting. Starting with the Dec. 17, 2014 issue, fire moved from sporadic placement in various parts of the paper into its fixed Section A location, under the Fire Districts heading, where fire articles appear in every issue.

As our fire reporting changed hands, both districts faced their darkest moments. The Great Recession hobbled both districts' finances, with terms "structural deficit" and "bankrupt" routinely written in our news articles. The districts either closed fire stations or cut daily staffing. Both beleaguered fire chiefs resigned and returned to their roots: MOFD's Bradley to the Central Valley and ConFire's Daryl Louder to Virginia.

Thanks in part to an improved economy, new chiefs Stephen Healy of MOFD and Jeff Carman of ConFire led their districts into the black, and our reporting covered the subsequent turnaround of the rock-bottom morale that pervaded both districts. Carman made news when ConFire took over the available Contra Costa County am-

balance transport contract, making it the first California fire district to make such a leap.

Our longest-running fire story ignited when the city of Lafayette threatened to secede from ConFire because of the closure of its Fire Station 16, and a back-and-forth attempt by both districts to construct a joint fire station in western Lafayette collapsed. Instead both chiefs pushed for the rebuild of fire stations in Orinda and Lafayette.

The uplifting tale of the MOFD firefighters and Finley Brown, the 6-year-old cancer patient who stole their hearts, made international news. Coverage of the firefighters' driving Brown to the hospital in a fire engine for her final chemo treatment made sound bites and headlines in media outlets worldwide. Brown continues to do well.

And just this year, we reported that MOFD elected its first female board president, Kathleen Famulener.

On a personal note, this paper took a huge leap of faith in 2012 when it hired me, an inexperienced fire reporter who did not know the difference between a fire engine and a fire truck, let alone a quint. If it were not for the help of former MOFD director Dick Olsen, it is no exaggeration to say that I would have failed. Olsen spent hours over lunches, coffee and phone calls too numerous to mention, explaining details of the fire service and the history of our fire districts.

Olsen deserves much of the credit for the success of this section of our paper. His legacy will extend throughout the future of Lamorinda Weekly fire reporting.

Courtesy AJ Brown

RESCUE ONE buys extra eyes for MOFD

5/31/2017

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"It takes a little time to learn how to fly these things," he said.

The drone was unveiled at a Moraga Fire Station 41 demonstration in April with an audience of MOFD employees, volunteers and members of the RESCUE

ONE board of directors on hand. Its infrared camera quickly located a volunteer hiding under a nearby canopy of trees. Four days later it was called into service during a search for a UPS truck driver feared injured and lost after an accident in Lafayette's Hunsaker Canyon, where, said Marquardt, "it did exactly what it needed to do."

MOFD used the resource again May 11 when a vehicle overshot the embankment on Pinehurst Road south of Canyon Road and May 12 to monitor firefighting efforts during a residential structure fire in Orinda. It has also been used during training flights over Station 41.

Healy said MOFD does not fly the drone during a vegetation fire, and neither should anyone else. "It is actually illegal," he added, explaining that Cal Fire does not fly its aircraft in an area where drones are aloft. "If you fly, we don't," Healy said.

Before takeoff Marquardt consults smartphone apps B4UFLY, AirMap and ForeFlight to learn

of possible airspace restrictions; he checks Aviation and 1-800-wx brief for weather reports.

A tablet computer controls the white with red stickered UAV with the red and green running lights and white strobe. It is capable of flying 60 miles per hour although Marquardt currently keeps it under 47 mph. It has a flight life of 23 minutes. While not waterproof, it operates with good stability in winds up to 23 miles per hour.

While FAA regulations require line-of-sight operations, a flight path under 400 feet and daylight only operations, the MOFD operator has obtained a waiver allowing flight operations after twilight.

The New York-based Center for the Study of the Drone says 347 public safety agencies nationwide use drones; 23 of those agencies are in California.

Alameda County Sheriff's office has six drones, and used one during Oakland's Ghost Ship warehouse fire in Oakland last December. Menlo Park Fire Pro-

tection District has three "large frame" drones plus a few handheld drones. Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, and the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District are in the process of designing their own programs, Marquardt said.

"This is another tool — an extra set of eyes to keep firefighters safe," said MOFD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein. Marquardt agreed, adding "the possibilities are endless." And like any good pilot, he is still building flight time. He is scheduled to attend a Menlo Park Fire Protection District symposium on public service drone use June 2. "Every day there's something new (to learn) and I'm trying to stay on top of it," Marquardt said.

[Editor's note: Lamorinda Weekly reported earlier on local drone use in a November 5, 2014 story: <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0818/Drones-in-Lamorinda-The-good-the-bad-the-unmanned.html>]

MOFD's new drone to help with emergencies, search and rescue

By Cathy Dausman *Lamorinda Weekly*



MOFD's new drone. Photo C. Dausman

With its agile new helper, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District now has an extra set of eyes in the sky — a six pound Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, or drone.

Its uses include search and rescue, medical emergencies and aerial photography in addition to fire service training.

The UAV, an Inspire 1 model manufac-

tured by SZ DJI Technology Company was purchased with a recent \$10,000 gift from RESCUE ONE Foundation. The drone was outfitted with two swap-out upgrades: a high-resolution camera and a FLIR infrared camera. The drone can carry a payload of two pounds, making it capable of ferrying a small first aid kit or portable radio to a victim who can't be reached from the ground.

"We are pleased to be using this technology to help support our mission of all-risk emergency service and community risk reduction," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy.

Commercial small drone operators are now licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration and only one MOFD employee — Capt. Michael Marquardt — is currently permitted to fly it. Marquardt has flown drones for the past 10 years, first as a hobby and now for MOFD.

Firefighters 'Fill the Boot' for muscular dystrophy

By Pippa Fisher

Continuing a long-standing commitment to the defeat of muscular dystrophy, Moraga-Orinda Fire District firefighters and paramedics took to the streets of Moraga recently to raise money in their traditional "Fill the Boot" campaign.

For over 60 years the International Association of Fire Fighters have raised more than \$558 million.

The organizer of the most recent day's fundraising in Moraga, firefighter-paramedic Andrew Leach, said that they raised just over \$3,800 as firefighters passed the boots around at the junction of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard and greeted drivers waiting at the traffic lights.

He said that that figure combined with t-shirt sales from the recent open house brings the amount raised for the Muscular Dystrophy

Association to over \$4,500 so far this year and expects the total to increase following the June 29 Orinda Fill the Boot day. Last year, between the two Fill the Boot days and the open house they raised over \$10,000.

Leach said that he works alongside the MDA representative and coordinates the dates and locations in the district to try and get as many on and off duty personnel to participate as possible. "The more firefighters we have out there, the more money we raise."

Money raised will sponsor kids suffering from various types of muscular dystrophy to participate in summer camps. There are two camps this year, one in the Santa Cruz Mountains and a second in Occidental. "In years past we have sent an engine company to the camp to spend a day with the kids,"

said Leach.

His favorite part of this effort? "Seeing all our firefighters out there working together to achieve a com-

mon goal which is to raise as much money as we can to send as many children as we can to the summer camps."



Firefighter paramedic Jacob Airola collecting money in Moraga.

Photo Pippa Fisher

tor. Again.

New job for Hoover

Former Moraga-Orinda Fire District Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover was appointed superintendent of the U.S. National Fire Academy in May. She becomes the first woman to lead the academy. "I feel so honored to serve our nation's fire service within my new role," Hoover said. "I also want to thank the citizens of MOFD and the members of the fire district for allowing me to serve them as the fire marshal and take those lessons throughout the rest of my career." Hoover worked at MOFD from 1998 until 2007 and later served as state fire marshal.



Tonya Hoover in 2014
Lamo archive



ABOUT TOWN

UPDATE FROM MORAGA TOWN STAFF
JUNE 29, 2017

PROCLAMATION HONORING RESCUE ONE FOUNDATION'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Dr. Gene Gottfried, Board President of the [Rescue One Foundation](#), accepted a

proclamation from the Council in honor of the Foundation's 40th Anniversary. Since its inception in 1977, the Rescue One Foundation has worked with the original Moraga Fire District and the current Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) to improve and maintain their Emergency Medical Services capabilities. The equipment and support provided by Rescue One Foundation has contributed to lives saved and has enhanced the quality of life in Moraga for 40 years. MOFD Chief Healy was present to offer his thanks on behalf of his personnel and the MOFD Board of Directors.

Rescue One marks its 40th year quietly helping to save lives

By Sophie Braccini



Rescue One Foundation members at a demonstration of the new drone that it purchased for MOFD. Seated: MOFD Captain Michael Marquardt (drone pilot), Gene Gottfried, Gordon Nathan; Standing: Linda Borelli, Ellen Long, Sally Whittaker, Greg Reams, MOFD board president Kathleen Famulener. Provided

Few people know that the Moraga Fire District was the first fire district in Northern California to possess a fully equipped paramedic unit to serve the population's medical emergencies.

It happened because, 40 years ago, Moraga residents were frustrated at not getting

ambulances fast enough. They created Rescue One, the foundation that paid for the very first emergency medical vehicle. Since then Orinda joined the Moraga district that became the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the two towns benefit from the same service.

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Rescue One anniversary

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Rescue One's roots can be traced back to one day in 1976. Jean Kirsch's husband cut his leg with a power saw and was bleeding profusely. Jean Kirsch called an ambulance while a local Emergency Medical Technician tried to stop the bleeding. The ambulance had to come from Walnut Creek — it took 30 minutes to arrive. Gordon Nathan, a volunteer firefighter and now board member of Rescue One, remembers that Kirsch almost died.

The scare spurred his wife and other residents into action. They decided that they needed a rolling emergency room available locally at all times.

Jean Kirsch, Jerry Mayer, Linda Borelli and Yvette Nance were some of the founding board members of Rescue One. At the time Borelli was president of the Moraga Service League, and that group was asked if they would raise the money for the first ambulance. Borelli, who has been on Rescue One's board almost continuously since, remembers going door to door asking everyone to chip in \$1 to fund the first vehicle. Rescue One also paid for the training of the first firefighters who volunteered to become paramedics.

When Orinda joined Moraga to form MOFD, Dr. Eugene Gottfried joined Rescue One's board, along with other Orinda residents. He remembers the pre-MOFD time when he needed an ambulance that took 45 minutes to come to his residence

and then got lost on its way to the hospital. Gottfried is Rescue One's current president. He explains that the foundation is funded mostly by unsolicited donations from people who were rescued by MOFD ambulances.

Nathan confirms that the group decided not to solicit donations, and he gives the example of the family and friends of Reed Austin Whittaker that made a donation of \$13,000 in memory of the young man who was killed in a tragic automobile accident five years ago. Several organizations also support Rescue One such as the Moraga Country Club, which asks its residents every year if they want to contribute, and Moraga Royale, which raises money for the foundation.

Over the years, the foundation has donated \$417,000 to MOFD. It funded an automated LUCAS chest compression system. Gottfried remembers that about five years ago, just after the LUCAS was purchased, MOFD used it to save the life of a bicyclist who crashed after suffering a heart attack. Money was also used to purchase the first Jaws of Life, a hydraulic apparatus used to open crashed vehicles in order to free people trapped inside, the first a fire district ever owned. MOFD was also the first district to get shoring equipment to allow rescuers to safely attend to people injured in a landslide. The foundation also funded a Zodiac water rescue boat for the

San Pablo Reservoir, which is part of MOFD's jurisdiction.

One of the latest donations was used to purchase a drone equipped with infrared cameras that is used in search and rescue missions and is capable of dropping a small first aid kit or miniature AED. The drone was used in the recent Campolindo fire to detect hot spots in the hills. Gottfried noted that MOFD was one of the first agencies to get such a device.

The fire district staff makes requests to the foundation and the board members see if it fits its mission of medical emergency, as well as its budget. The board also wants to support the education of the paramedics. For example Rescue One funded the equipment of an education center within Station 45 in Orinda.

As it marks its 40th anniversary, Rescue One continues to fund equipment and training so medical emergencies are responded to in the two communities with trained professionals equipped with cutting-edge, life-saving equipment.

The 40th anniversary will be celebrated all year long. The Town of Moraga honored the foundation at a recent council meeting with a proclamation. Rescue One was in the Fourth of July parade in Orinda, and it is showcasing its history at the MOFD open houses.

Town 6/17
Proclamation

PROCLAMATION HONORING

Rescue One Foundation on their 40th Anniversary

WHEREAS, the Rescue One Foundation was established in 1977 as a non-profit organization to help the community maintain the finest emergency medical care and to work with the Fire District management and staff to improve its Emergency Medical Services capabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Rescue One Foundation is the first citizen-inspired foundation in California to support its local fire district and paramedic program; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Rescue One Foundation is to receive and administer funds donated by our citizens in order to enhance public safety by providing advanced medical equipment, supplies and educational services for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District that might not otherwise be available through the normal budget process; and

WHEREAS, as of March 2017 the Rescue One Foundation has donated \$417,934 in support of Emergency Medical Services for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and its predecessor, the Moraga Fire District; and

WHEREAS, the Rescue One Foundation has helped provide items such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training equipment, heavy rescue equipment, and cardiac monitors/defibrillators which provide wireless data transmission to local hospitals; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the Rescue One Foundation purchased eight automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and donated four to the Moraga Police Department and four to the Orinda Police Department to further expand the delivery of emergency medical services to our community; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the rescue One Foundation donated an AED for use at the Moraga Library and in 2016 donated another AED for use at the Moraga Commons Park; and

WHEREAS, the successful ongoing, selfless humanitarian mission of the Rescue One Foundation has directly contributed to lives saved and has enhanced the quality of life in Moraga for 40 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Teresa Onoda, Mayor of the Town of Moraga, along with my fellow Councilmembers, do hereby thank the Rescue One Foundation and all members past and present for significant contributions to the Town of Moraga, and hereby proclaim the recognition of Rescue One Foundation's 40th Anniversary of service to the Town of Moraga and encourage all citizens to support their organization.




Teresa Onoda, Mayor



PROCLAMATION HONORING THE
RESCUE ONE FOUNDATION
FOR 40 YEARS OF SUPPORT TO THE
MORAGA-ORINDA FIRE DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Rescue One Foundation was established in 1977 as a non-profit organization to help the community maintain the finest emergency medical care and to work with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District management and staff to improve its Emergency Medical Services capabilities; and

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WHEREAS, the successful ongoing, selfless humanitarian mission of the Rescue One Foundation has directly contributed to lives saved and has enhanced the quality of life in Moraga, Orinda and Canyon for 40 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District Board of Directors and its employees, do hereby thank the

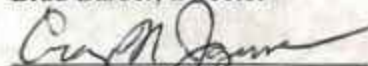
RESCUE ONE FOUNDATION

and all its members, past and present, for significant contributions to the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, and hereby proclaim the recognition of the Rescue One Foundation's 40th Anniversary of service to the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District.

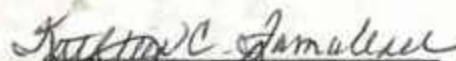
The Clerk of the Board shall attest and affix the seal of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to this proclamation on this 18th day of July 2017.

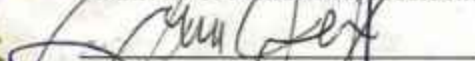

Stephen Healy, Fire Chief


Brad Barber, Director


Craig Jorgens, Director




Kathleen C. Famulener, President


John Jex, Director


Steve Anderson, Director

Healy reflects on his years with MOFD

By Nick Marnell



MOFD Fire Chief Stephen Healy: More mountains to climb. Photo Andy Scheck

Stephen Healy spent barely any time talking about what he accomplished as fire chief of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Rather, a relaxed Healy, who leaves the district Sept. 20, talked over coffee and toast almost exclusively about those he worked with in his 12 years with MOFD.

"I'll most miss the people," the chief said. "Since 2006, I have been involved with the hiring or promotion of just about everyone in the district."

His interactions with people gave Healy his highest highs, but also provided his top challenge once he moved into the fire chief seat. "Deciding who to hire," Healy said. "The final say on hiring a firefighter was the biggest difference I felt as chief. You have the responsibility to hire the best people, and for some, it was tough telling them this was not a career for them."

From day one, the chief set out to establish trust in communication. If Healy had the chance to improve one aspect of his job, it would have been figuring out a way to better communicate. "We've always struggled with this. Do I send emails? Do I do station visits? Should I go through the battalion chiefs? The firefighters still bring it up - communication (stinks)."

The human resources and the legal aspects of the fire chief job Healy struggled with the most. "It's unpleasant, and it's all gray. That's where you sink or swim - how you handle personnel issues. The public knows nothing about those issues. The firefighters know nothing. The board knows nothing. I will not miss that."

When Healy took over as fire chief in 2013, he jumped right into the firefighter contract nego-

tiations. The chief bore the brunt of the rhetoric and emotion along the way, as he tried to remain sensitive to both the board and the union.

His peers helped him through that tough time, and Paige Meyer, fire chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, sat at the top of the help list. "During negotiations, I would call Paige, worried that the whole thing would blow. I'd call him at the end of the day, 'Dude, I'm worried, I'm nervous.' Paige was empathetic. 'I've been there. I've done it. You'll be OK. You're doing the right thing.' He was always there when I needed him."

As for the negotiated contract, "I felt good about everything except the pay cuts. The emotional impact had a big effect on a lot of people."

Operationally, Healy said he was happy with the district's lowered score assigned by the Insurance Services Office, which improved the district rating from a 3 to a 2, helping lower fire insurance premiums for some residents. And the chief repeated with pride that not one home in the district has been destroyed by a vegetation fire since 1988.

The rift between the two municipalities of the eponymous district over a perceived inequitable tax allocation barely registered on Healy's radar. "It's exaggerated. A small group of people are trying to make something more than what it

is. I respect their passion, but I do not agree with their philosophy. MOFD is more than just Moraga and Orinda. We cover the reservoirs, Tilden Park, Canyon, what is it, 38 different tax zones?"

The chief may have downplayed his efforts, but others recognized his legacy. "It was great working with Chief Healy," said Local 1230 President Vince Wells. "He understood the importance of a good labor-management relationship."

"Chief Healy came in at a very difficult time and did a tremendous job getting everyone together to save the district," said Kathleen Famulener, MOFD board president. "The lights in the district remained on because of him."

Healy will continue to announce the football and lacrosse games at Monte Vista High School, where his son plays both sports. As a highpointer, the chief has scaled the highest peaks in all of the western states except for those in Wyoming, Montana and Colorado, and he intends to complete the list. "And I want to see a Steelers football game in Pittsburgh, a Denver Broncos game and a hockey game in Montreal."

But he likely will not have a lot of free time. "You can let everyone know that I am definitely looking for a job," the chief said, as his phone buzzed with another inquiry from a recruiter.

Rescue One Foundation board of directors seeks applicants to fill vacancy

Submitted by John Kennedy

The Rescue One Foundation has a vacancy on its Board of Directors and seeks applications from interested residents from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, particularly those from Orinda.

The Rescue One Foundation was formed to receive tax-free donations, fund educational programs for firefighter/paramedics, and purchase lifesaving equipment to enhance the effectiveness of fire district emergency medical services. Since its formation, the foundation has purchased over \$400,000 worth of equipment that would not have been available through the district's regular

Lamorinda Weekly 12/13/17
budget.

The board presently consists of 11 members who meet on the first Monday evening of the month nine months each year. The foundation's primary activities are participation in the fire district open houses in Orinda and Moraga in April and October, respectively, plus the Fourth of July celebrations in Orinda and Moraga each year. For further information about this position, please visit www.mofd.org/about/rescueone.

Letters of interest should be sent no later than Dec. 31 to: Rescue One Foundation, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556.

Lamorinda Jun 12/15/17
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Since its formation, the foundation has purchased more than \$400,000 worth of equipment that would not have been available through the district's regular budget.

When the combined Moraga-Orinda Fire District was formed in 1997, the Rescue One Foundation board was expanded to ensure representation from both Orinda and Moraga residents.

There are 11 board members who meet on the first Monday of the month (nine months a year). The foundation's primary activities are participating in the fire district open houses in Orinda and Moraga in April and October, respectively, plus the Fourth of July celebrations in Orinda

Apply for Rescue One Foundation board

There is a vacancy on the Rescue One Foundation board, and those interested from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, particularly from Orinda, may apply by Dec. 31. Send letters of interest to the Rescue One Foundation, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga CA 94556.

The board was formed more than 40 years ago to address the need for paramedic services and equipment in what was the Mor-

ORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2018

Plenty of 'new' for MOFD in 2018

By Nick Marnell



In the district crosshairs in 2018

Photo Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District redefined the "new" of the new year Jan. 3 as new board president Brad Barber convened the first 2018 district meeting at a new time — 6:15 p.m. — in a new location — a conference room at the Orinda City

Hall complex.

New goals were proposed for the district by Orinda resident Richard Nelson, starting with the timely rebuild of Fire Station 43, around the corner from which Nelson lives. "The public will forgive mistakes of the past but only if they are not repeated in the future," Nelson said of the beleaguered project that suffered through two false starts in 2017. Nelson also stressed the importance of improving the inadequate flow at many Orinda fire hydrants, which are owned by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. "It's time to work with the city of Orinda and EBMUD," Nelson said. "It's our problem, not somebody else's problem."

New Fire Chief Dave Winnacker announced a new schedule for the Station 43 rebuild, with bidding on the project to close Jan. 19,

board approval of the contract on March 9 and the first shovels to hit the ground March 21.

The chief shared news from the Milligan family of Santa Barbara, whose house was saved by an MOFD strike team during the December Southern California wildfires. Fire roared down the hillside into the neighborhood and burned houses on all sides of the Milligan property, and due to the efforts of Capt. John Bensley, engineer David Mazaika and firefighter-paramedics Andrew Leach and Jeremy Kshevatzky, Marshall Milligan said his house was unscathed.

Milligan thanked the MOFD crew members for their effort. "Their response was as professional as their performance in the field. They said they appreciate the opportunity to serve and don't deserve any special thanks," said Mil-

ligan, who offered special thanks nonetheless via a \$2,500 donation to the Rescue One Foundation, a nonprofit which supports emergency medical programs and purchases medical equipment for the district.

Barber added a new topic under the district announcement section of the meeting, calling for future agenda items to be discussed by the board. Barber kicked off the new format by offering quick reinforcement to Nelson, ordering an agenda item for Feb. 21 on steps to take to improve the inadequate water flow of underperforming district fire hydrants.

The district also announced a new meeting schedule for 2018, doubling the number to the first and third Wednesdays of each month, rotating between Moraga and Orinda.

MOFD cautiously welcomes in the new year

By Nick Marnell



Superior Court Judge John Kennedy, left, swears in new MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker at the Hacienda de las Flores. Winnacker's wife, Corrie, looks on.
Photo Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board moved on from a difficult 2017 by ushering in a change in district leadership, including the election of board officers, retention of a new law firm and the approval of a contract for the recently hired fire chief.

It was one bit of bad news after another in 2017 for MOFD, which fired its auditor over misap-

plying \$20 million on the district financial reports, was stunned by the unexpected departure of its fire chief and experienced numerous setbacks in the construction of Fire Station 43 in Orinda. Newly elected board president Brad Barber said that potential litigation over the fire station chaos helped convince the district that it needed a law firm with public real estate

experience, and MOFD hired San Francisco-based Renne Sloan Holtzman Sakai LLC as district counsel effective Dec. 20.

Barber named the rebuild of the Orinda station as one of his top goals for the district in 2018. "We want to do everything possible, as quickly as possible, to finish Station 43 on budget and on time," said Barber, stopping short

of promising a completion date. He noted that the Local 1230 labor contract is also a top priority and Barber said the district looks for a smooth, fair process during negotiations. The current contract with the firefighters expires at the end of June.

"From where I sit, Station 43 is the most pressing district need," said Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, sworn in at the Dec. 20 district meeting. "If not properly managed in a hands-on manner – by me – there could be a less than desirable outcome." Neither the chief nor district union representative Lucas Lambert would comment on labor negotiations.

Also for the new year, Barber said that he had not forgotten about the low water pressure delivered by many fire hydrants in north Orinda, but that the problem was more complicated than he originally thought because of the unclear timeline for the East Bay Municipal Utility District to upgrade the hydrants. "Should the public have to wait 20 years? We may need those resources," said Barber, citing the concern of a North Bay-type wildfire in the north Orinda area.

MOFD firefighters share their passion for serving their hometowns

By Nick Marnell

There is a good chance that one of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District firefighters who responds to your emergency call either lives in the district, grew up in the district or graduated from one of the three Lamorinda high schools. And to hear the firefighters talk, they could not be more proud of that pedigree.

"It's great. I enjoy the service part of the job," said firefighter Mark DeWeese, Lafayette resident and Campolindo High School graduate who coaches junior varsity football at the school. "We're serving people that we know personally, and I like to think it's nice for them that someone they know

is helping them in their time of need."

The desire to give back to the community was expressed by many of the firefighters. Julie Murphy, born and raised in Moraga, a Campo graduate and Saint Mary's College graduate as well, recalled how impressed she was when she attended Camino Pablo kindergarten and saw the fire engine and the ambulance pull up to the school, and then watched a presentation by the firefighters. "Now, it feels so good to be doing the same thing those firefighters were doing back then. It's so cool to give back," she said.

Engineer David Mazaika recently delivered his own fire presentation at Mulberry Tree preschool in Moraga. "I felt so proud to speak at my own school," said the 1995 Campo graduate. "It's an honor to serve the community. I love running into friends and schoolteachers and classmates."

Running into those old friends and classmates can be a mixed blessing at times, especially when the firefighters respond to a call that features one of their friends having done something stupid. "They'll hope it's not me on the call because they know I'll give

them a hard time," said DeWeese, one of 13 MOFD firefighters who graduated from Lamorinda high schools.

The close connection to friends and family can also present special obstacles. Engineer Tim Williams grew up in Burton Valley and graduated from Campo in 2001. And though he, too, enjoys running into and serving family, friends and classmates, one aspect of that closeness sometimes stresses him. "I thought it would be easy, but really it's more difficult," Williams said. "I feel the pressure of expectations, and I don't want to let anybody down."

Often the local connection for the fire personnel is through family. Murphy's older sister worked for MOFD, and Mazaika's father worked for the Moraga Fire District. Capt. Brian Oliver, a Campo graduate, had his first contact with the fire service through a family emergency.

"My grandmother had a stroke, and the Moraga Fire District answered the emergency medical call," Oliver said. As his mother, a registered nurse, was settling the bills, she reached out to the fire district but was surprised that she was not billed for the service. "I

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From left, Chris Davies, Brian Oliver and Mark DeWeese: Campolindo-bred, with finishing touches applied by MOFD. Photo provided

thought that was such a great burden lifted off of her," Oliver said. It made such an impression that he joined the fire service shortly after college.

Engineer and 2002 Campo graduate Chris Davies comes from a family of ranchers who settled in Moraga from Denmark in 1881. "I am the first firefighter in the family," said Davies, who jokingly looks back at a school counselor who told him he would never make anything of himself if he did not go to a four-year college. Davies is one of four MOFD firefighters who live in the district.

The underlying sentiment of

many who interviewed was expressed by firefighter Steve Rogness, born and raised in Lafayette, and a 1989 Acalanes High School graduate. "I got a lot from others as I was growing up, and now it feels great to give back," Rogness said.

Their local agency through which to give back engenders pride in many of the firefighters. "When I came to learn about the reputation of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, it was an easy decision to join here," said Oliver, who had worked for American Medical Response before he came aboard. "MOFD is the premier destination."

Near-record attendance at MOFD Open House



Photo Nick Marnell

From left, new probationary firefighter-paramedics Andy Kalenian, Ben Guthmiller, Thomas Schwedhelm and Mike Stiehr, were among the near-record 648 attendees at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Open House May 2 in Orinda. Fire Chief Dave Winnacker welcomed the four as they move into front line service. "The reports of their performance

during a challenging four month academy match the high expectations the organization had for this group and we are confident they will continue to perform at a high level," Winnacker said. "With the approach of fire season, the boost in staffing is timely as we anticipate yet another busy summer and fall." - N. Marnell

Lamorinda Weekly 5/14/18



picture of the Rescue One Foundation Proclamations proudly displayed in the entrance to Fire Administration.

4/30/18

MOFD firefighters save the life of a cyclist in Orinda

By Nick Marnell

Saturday morning, April 21, a bicyclist alerted the crew at Moraga-Orinda Fire District Station 45 that a fellow cyclist was down on Camino Sobrante in Orinda. Before the call was even dispatched, firefighters arrived at the scene of a man who had suffered a cardiac emergency.

"We got there at 9:09, and at 9:11 we gave him his first shock," said MOFD engineer Daniel Elbanna, who described how the patient, after being revived by a third shock, groggily complained only about the IV needle that was bothering his leg. Less than 20 minutes after the first responders arrived, the patient was on his way to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek.

"To have a patient who was dead a few minutes ago complaining about knee pain was phenomenal," Elbanna said. "It was a horrible thing that happened, but the outcome? We've been glowing about it for weeks."

"It was truly an example of great teamwork, and that is why

I'm here today," Craig Schlatter, the MOFD May 16 district meeting, the downed bicyclist, said among family, friends and firefighters at



From left, MOFD firefighter-paramedic Kevin Brashem, Craig Schlatter, and MOFD engineer Dan Elbanna.

Photo Nick Marnell

5/30/2018 Lamorinda Weekly

MOFD open house features fire prevention exhibits and activities

Lamorinda Weekly
10/3/18

By Nick Marnell

LOOK. LISTEN. LEARN.

Be aware.

Fire can happen anywhere.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK
OCTOBER 7-13, 2018
firepreventionweek.org



Photo MOFD

Fire prevention has everyone's attention, with some areas within the Moraga-Orinda Fire District lying in what Cal Fire calls a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. MOFD Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard offers advice for all Lamorinda residents, whether living in a high danger zone or not, through this year's Oct 7-13 Fire Prevention Week campaign: "Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere."

Look for places fire could start. Take a good look around your home. Identify potential fire hazards and take care of them.

Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm. You could have only minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Go to your outside meeting place, which should be a safe distance from the home and where everyone should know to meet.

Learn two ways out of every room and make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily and are free of clutter.

"As we head into fall, we should make sure our homes are safer from fire risk from the inside out," Leonard said. She advises the following for inside the home:

- Check and replace batteries in all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Replace furnace filters and keep clear all combustible storage around furnaces and water heaters.
- Know and practice your fire escape plan. Have two ways out of your home and a meeting place for your family.
- Check all home extinguishers and replace if needed.
- Establish a "kid free" zone around stoves and ovens.
- Check extension cords to make sure the insulation has no cuts,

wear or is hot to the touch when used. Dispose and replace all damaged extension cords. Best to plug the appliance directly into the outlet.

- Turn off any portable heaters if you leave the room or go to bed.
- Check the chimney damper to make sure it is open before having any fires in your fireplace.

Outside the home, Leonard stresses:

- Maintain your roof, gutters, decks and around the home free of dead leaves and vegetation.
- Make sure your roof is clear from overhanging tree limbs, especially near your chimney.
- Be aware of "Red Flag" warning days. These are weather conditions that increase the risk of wildfire.

"As we head into fall, it is important to remember that we must be vigilant about maintaining our vegetation to reduce wildfire spread risk. We have dry conditions and any spark can easily ignite into a fire. As the weather cools and the days grow shorter, we spend more time indoors, so we need to practice fire safety inside and out," Leonard said.

The fire marshal encourages all residents to come to the MOFD fall open house at Fire Station 41 in Moraga on Oct. 6 from 8 a.m. to noon to learn more.

The foundation's foundation

By Cathy Dausman

Ellen Long has devoted a lifetime to serving her family and community. She's been a preschool teacher and teacher's aide, but she devoted heart and soul – and 34 years of her life – to Rescue One Foundation.

Rescue One Foundation (established 1977) is a non-profit philanthropic organization supporting the Moraga-Orinda Fire District through its purchases of advanced life-saving equipment and supplies not otherwise available through the district's regular budget. Past foundation donations include automated external defibrillators for fire, police and community, CPR training equipment and a Lucas chest compression system, a Stryker power load ambulance cot and an unmanned

aerial vehicle for search and rescue.

Long admits she is "embarrassed about the fuss" her stepping down has caused; she reluctantly agreed to an interview only after realizing it might focus attention anew on Rescue One.

Rescue One President Gordon Nathan calls Long "quiet and unassuming," but her service years as vice president, secretary, treasurer and current historian tell a different story. Nathan first met Long when his children attended Mulberry Tree Nursery School, where Long taught. "She is a tireless worker and selfless person who loves her community," he said.

Long counters she is simply one of 11 board members whose numbers include businessmen and women, a doctor and a judge. Although its

members may hold different opinions, Long says the group can always reach a consensus.

Long's story may sound familiar to many Lamorindans. She was raised in San Francisco, attended UC Berkeley, met her husband when he was in law school and started a family. After nine years in Castro Valley the family moved to Moraga. The town was "not booming yet" when the Longs bought their home in 1969. Long joined the Moraga Service League in 1970 and learned about the half hour ambulance wait a member's badly injured husband endured. This precipitated fundraising \$10,000 for a rescue vehicle destined for what was then the Moraga Fire Protection District. Long recalls volunteers, herself included, from many service organizations going door to door to solicit one dollar.

MOFD retired Division Chief Darrell Lee was a young firefighter/paramedic during the 1980s when he met the iconic "Miss Ellie," Lee says.

Long baked apple pies for all three station shifts. "I don't remember how long she did this, but it was at least 15 years," he said. "She made me one of her pies when I was a captain at Station 41. I assisted their family off-duty and she asked how she could return the favor. I asked, 'How about the famous baked apple pie?' She didn't hesitate," he said. "She was like a mom to the crews always asking about their families," Lee added. When it came time for business and Lee was requesting equipment, "Ellen would usu-



Ellen Long

Photo Cathy Dausman

ally look me in the eye and ask if this was something we really needed."

With a "yes" from Lee, Long promised "you have my vote." Long's favorite foundation event has always been the semiannual foundation-sponsored MOFD Open House held in Moraga in the spring and Orinda in the fall, and the abundance of and enthusiasm of children attendees.

"They're so excited, and so willing to get involved," she said.

Long says she feels bad about retiring, but insists the foundation needs "some

young blood." Asked to create a job description for her replacement, Long lists someone who is enthusiastic, interested in the fire service, willing to commit to a worthwhile cause, has computer literacy and is able to attend evening meetings.

"When Ellen joined the Rescue One board in 1985, we knew we had another community loving, active member," Nathan said. "The entire board is sad to see her leave, but we all offer our best wishes for a well-deserved retirement."

Fuel break kickoff features successful test of MOFD-developed warning system



Photo courtesy Mike Marquart, MOFD

MOFD's Dennis Rein outlines the day's program to fuel break participants July 11

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District and its program partners July 11 kicked off the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break project, a state-funded effort to prevent a catastrophic wildfire by removing dangerous fuels along a 14-mile ridge from Tilden Park to Acalanes High School. The kickoff featured the first major test of MOFD-developed

heat sensing technology, which detects components of fire behavior and forwards the data for preparation of an evacuation plan.

"It was one of the most exciting demonstrations ever put on in the world of wildfire prevention, taking data from the sensors to provide an evacuation model," said Tim Woodbury of Splunk Technology, a San Francisco data analytics company that

parsed the information.

The district tested heat sensing technology on a small scale during evacuation drills in December and January. "The system detected and transmitted data that resulted in both an alert, fire modeling and notifications to public safety," said Dennis Rein, MOFD emergency preparedness coordinator, who supervised the drills.

Shortly afterward, the

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation expressed interest in the sensor program, and through the Rescue One Foundation, which has contributed more than \$500,000 to the fire service over 42 years, authorized a \$100,000 grant to MOFD for the venture. Genny Biggs of the Moore Foundation called the program "a promising and potentially life-saving, near-term tech solution to reducing the threat and impact of severe wildfires. We believe the system MOFD has developed could significantly improve early detection and response."

To produce the prototypes, MOFD teamed up with various partners including Analog Devices, which built the sensors, and ZoneHaven, a newly formed company that developed the software system.

At the fuel break kickoff, the district placed 200 sensors around a 15-acre controlled burn off of Bear Creek Road in north Orinda. The sensors picked up a rise in temperature and triggered a simulation model of where the fire would spread over the next five hours. That information was used to determine and recommend an evacuation plan, to be put in place by the appropriate public safety agencies. "The sensors all worked perfectly," said MOFD

Chief Dave Winnacker

Robert Shear of ZoneHaven sees the program as far more than simply detecting fire conditions. "We've built a community collaboration platform for wildfires, evacuations and any type of natural disaster," he said. "We want to help communities understand the real threats and understand more about their evacuation zones. Our real value is bringing this interface to the community."

Other technology exists to detect wildfires, including satellite programs, automated surveillance and other sensor products. But Shear said that only the MOFD sensor program gives an instantaneous readout of fire danger along with an evacuation model. "You don't have hours when a wildfire hits. You have minutes," Shear said.

Though the fire district developed the sensor technology under Winnacker's leadership, MOFD cannot convert the concept into a marketable product, because that is not what a public agency does. That is the challenge for ZoneHaven, which is looking at private-public partnerships and also a subscription model for property owners.

"We want this to become a common platform across all of California," Shear said.

MOFD red tags 320 properties for fire code violations

By Nick Marnell

In light of the catastrophic wildfires over the past several years, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has heightened its enforcement on problem district properties, requiring weed abatement to be in strict compliance with the district fire code. Unlike in previous enforcement efforts, when MOFD only responded to citizen complaints, the district has proactively assessed problem properties in 2019, especially those near district

evacuation routes.

The district began its fire code enforcement program in March. Fire inspectors went door to door, with the focus on education, pointing out what violations existed on the properties.

In April, the district returned to the same property owners to see what work had been done. "The numbers were not good. Eighty percent had not done noticeable work," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said.

With the weed abatement

deadline of June 15, MOFD began aggressive enforcement the next day. A staggering 320 properties were red tagged by the district. Owners of those parcels received a five-day notice to correct fire code violations on their property, such as unruly brush, a dead tree or overgrown grasses.

"Some people have just refused to do the work," a frustrated Winnacker said. The chief stressed that the district is more than willing to work with residents, but it

is of utmost importance that those who are red tagged contact the district, especially if there is a reason they are unable to do the work. MOFD will provide a list of contractors who are qualified to do the weed abatement.

In the event that a resident totally ignores the citation, the district board conducts a hearing, and can authorize a work order for an outside contractor to do the abatement. Contra Costa County advances the district the money to pay the contrac-

tor and the county places a lien on the property for the amount of the clean up. The district does not negotiate favorable prices with the contractor on a board authorized work order.

But Winnacker stressed that the time and effort required by the MOFD staff to place a lien on property is last thing the district wants to do. "Our goal is always to achieve voluntary compliance," the chief said.

MOFD floats radical concept to effectuate weed abatement

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker has made mandatory weed abatement by the owners of all 14,000 district parcels one of his top priorities. But the chief is not happy with the progress.

"Thirty percent of the homes on Moraga Way are still not done," Winnacker said, referring to the section of the road from south of the Orinda Crossroads to the Moraga Shopping Center, one of the main district evacuation routes. The MOFD weed abatement deadline was June 15.

As a way to guarantee that hazardous fuel mitigation is completed on a parcel, Winnacker has proposed that every time there is a real property transfer, one of the conditions of closing becomes an inspection by the fire district to ensure that all weed abatement is up to code.

"My first instinct is that this is an issue that typically would be a real estate agent disclosure responsibility," said Mark Zinman of MZ Financial Group in Moraga.

Clark Thompson, a broker with Village Associates in Orinda, said that weed abatement compliance is already

part of the seller disclosure material. On Page 10 of the Statewide Seller and Buyer Advisory, which Thompson said is customarily used by most real estate companies to assure that buyers and sellers understand all aspects of the transfer of property, Item No. 6 advises of potential fire dangers on the property for sale. The Seller Property Questionnaire requires sellers to check a box that they are aware of all government regulations, including that "tall grass, brush or other vegetation be cleared."

Being aware of the regulations is one thing; Winnacker proposes a stronger mandate - that weed abatement on the real property be done to MOFD specifications before escrow can close.

Though Thompson has no issue with mandatory weed abatement, "Having a government representative come out prior to close of escrow, who does not understand the dynamics and intricacies of closing, would be not at all appropriate," he said.

"There are things where only government can set the regulations about items of public safety. This is one, and we support the concept," Compass associate broker Larry Hood said of Win-

nacker's proposal, but with a similar caveat as Thompson's. "The primary danger with these types of public safety concerns is that they become bloated with administrative costs and add time to a transaction. The key is to put them into place without adding costs and time to the transaction."

Claudia Gohler, Compass real estate agent in Lafayette, agrees with the chief in principle. "It makes sense, but maybe that's something that should be done before the seller puts the property on the market," she said. "Having an added inspection could delay the process. You'll be relying on the fire department's schedule to conform to the time of the closing."

Winnacker discussed his proposal at a recent district board meeting, and the item may return with greater detail later this year.

MOFD awarded major state wildfire prevention grant

... continued from Page A1

"We're not sure how the details will work out yet. We may need to work with the city and property owners to get permits and permissions," ConFire Deputy Chief Lewis Broschard said.

That will be a concern for MOFD as well. Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said that the district will be able to mobilize immediately – "One of our strengths is our small size," he said – but the chief is preparing to face potential environmental hurdles from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bay Area Air Quality Management and other entities.

Rapid mobilization will be critical, as Cal Fire says in its summary report that the fuel break must be completed in 2019. The project was expected to head to the MOFD board for formal acceptance of the grant money at the March 20 district meeting.

Under Winnacker's direction, MOFD has amped up its north Orinda fire prevention efforts since he took over as chief in December 2017. Working with Cal Fire, the district organized vegetation trimming along Bear Creek Road. It tested poor-flowing hydrants, and identified supplemental water sources like pools, ponds and privately maintained water

tanks. PG&E trimmed trees interfering with power lines along Miner Road, and the district tested fire detection sensors in January during a north Orinda evacuation exercise.

North Orinda residents are savvy about the need for fire prevention, and local neighborhoods are proactive, as the Orinda Downs Homeowners Association contracted for a goat herd to trim back vegetation in open space west of Happy Valley Road each of the last two years. In the 2018 general election Lucy Talbot, a businesswoman with no firefighting background, came within 123 votes of defeating a career firefighter for a north Orinda MOFD board seat, running on a platform based largely on increased fire prevention for the area, for which she continues to advocate.

"While a (fuel) break is a place to start, I have grave concerns that far too little is being done by our elected officials to address the very real threat of a fire danger to our community," Talbot said.

The North Orinda Fuel Break project will reduce fuel loads in more than 1,700 acres in and adjacent to Lamorinda. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity – a recognition of a critical situation, and the state has opened the door," Winnacker said.

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3-20-19

MOFD awarded major state wildfire prevention grant

By Nick Marnell

Gov. Gavin Newsom has approved a multimillion dollar project to reduce fuel loads in the high-risk wildfire areas of north Orinda and along Lafayette Ridge, stemming from a grant application submitted to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

According to Cal Fire, California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018, killing more than 100 people, destroying nearly 23,000 structures and burning over 1.8 million acres. Newsom made wildfire prevention a top priority of his new administration, and on Jan. 9 he issued an executive order directing Cal Fire to recommend immediate action to protect vulnerable state communities. The North Orinda Fuel Break project is one of 35 programs that the state agency identified for implementation.

"The project is approved and we are ready to go," Cal Fire Deputy Chief Scott McLean said.

North Orinda has always been a top concern of MOFD for the threat of a wildfire. "It has many high-value homes, and it's not far from the 1991 Oakland hills fire," said Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, who authored the Cal

Fire grant application. "North Orinda is the highest wildfire risk in our district."

Lee submitted his grant application in November, requesting \$250,000 to implement a hazardous fuel reduction and removal project along Bear Creek Road in north Orinda. Cal Fire expanded the reach of the project to encompass an 11-mile fuel break from Inspiration Point in Tilden Park, along Bear Creek Road and Happy Valley Road through Lafayette, to the Pleasant Hill Road - Highway 24 intersection, and the agency bumped the estimated cost to \$5 million. The completed fuel break will allow more time for evacuation and fire suppression response.

Cal Fire used various data points to rank the 35 statewide projects, with the North Orinda Fuel Break coming in at No. 9, scoring at the top for the number of communities at risk and the affected population. "We were fortunate to have submitted a project that was complete and fit the scope of what the governor was looking for," Lee said.

As the project will cross jurisdictional boundaries, MOFD plans to partner with the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the East Bay Regional Park District and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

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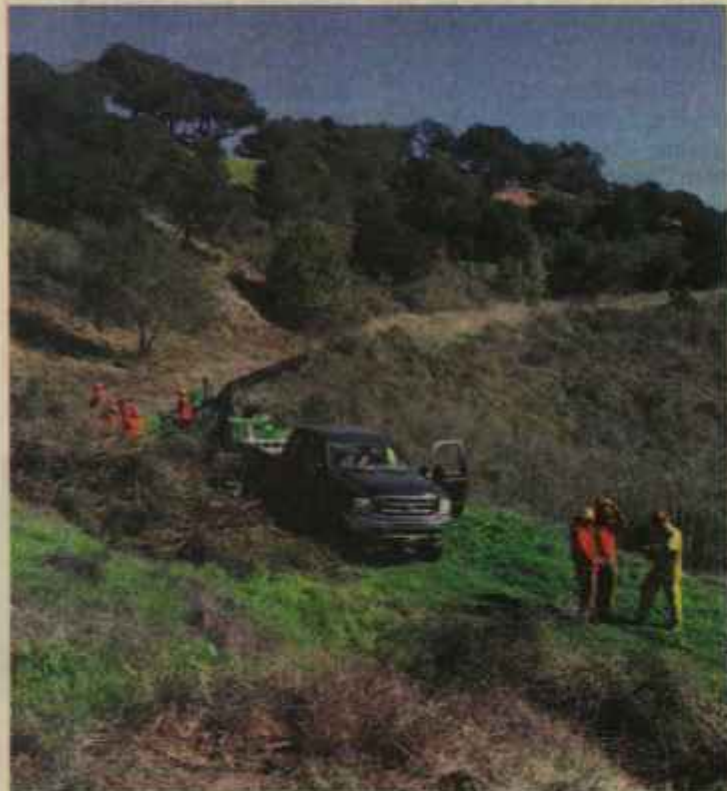


Photo MOFD

Cal Fire conservation crew at the 2018 Bear Ridge fuel reduction project in north Orinda.

Wildfire prevention and preparedness workshop offers fire safety tips



Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker at the recent Fire Safety Forum.

Photo Vera Kochan

By Vera Kochan

Campolindo High School hosted a community awareness workshop June 27 to further educate homeowners about wildfire prevention and preparedness. Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan sponsored the event, which was attended by approximately 70 of her Lam-

orinda constituents.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker gave an informational presentation beginning with a history of fires to the area. The most deadly fires arrive by winds from the north or northeast due to their dry components. These winds usually happen in the fall season. He further explained,

"Within two miles of the Caldecott Tunnel, 15 major fires have burned since 1923. Eleven of these destroyed 3,542 homes, took 26 lives and caused over \$2 billion in losses."

Winnacker stated there are two ways a fire typically spreads. One way is from object to object, such as tree to tree or tree to house. Another

way is from floating embers which can be carried on the wind to distant locations. It is for these reasons that the community must maintain a clear yard.

Every home in the Lam-orinda area was mailed a yellow resident's guide to wildfire preparedness. Among the invaluable information on its pages are pointers for reducing the risk of spreading fires. Limit the amount of flammable vegetation and trim branches that overhang the home, porch or deck; remove dead vegetation and dry debris from the property; do not store flammable materials next to the home or other wooden structures; clean all dead leaves from roofs and rain gutters; keep grass cut to less than 3 inches and have a defensible space around your home.

In the event of a fire, parents of school-aged children were urged to trust that the schools know what to do in an emergency. Winnacker stressed, "Schools have Shelter-in-Place procedures. Parents don't need to come to

a school to pick up their kids. This actually impedes the fire department's efforts. We spray the whole school with water, and when the fire is out the kids will be transported to a safe location for pickup."

Also on hand to educate the public was Community Warning System Senior Emergency Planning Coordinator Livia Pop. The CWS is an emergency alert system for residents and businesses in Contra Costa County that are threatened by an emergency or are in immediate danger. The alert instructions will advise the recipient what to do to stay safe: shelter-in-place; evacuate immediately; avoid the area; attempt to locate missing person or law enforcement activity (lockdown).

Pop stressed, "For those with Caller ID the display will read as (000) 000-0000. Do not hang up! This will be your CWS Alert notification. Please follow the instructions in our messages to stay safe."

Fire prevention rises toward celebrity status at MOFD

By Nick Marnell

To bolster its fire prevention efforts, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District bumped its fuels mitigation manager position from seasonal to year-round, increased the number of fire prevention aides from six to nine and plans to add a full-time administrator to support expanded fire prevention efforts. These actions are in addition to the state-funded North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break project, which commences in mid-July and will be supervised by a project

manager and the district Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Based on public demand, the MOFD board directed Fire Chief Dave Winnacker to shift \$150,000 from a contingency fund in the 2019-20 district budget into the fire prevention division. The major benefactor becomes the district fuels mitigation program, which increases from a six-month to a year-round program, and now includes funding for one full-time, year-round fuels mitigation manager and two seasonal,

part-time fuels mitigation and outreach crews. These three-person crews will continue to operate the district wood chipper program, which is already booked through August.

Because of the added fire prevention efforts, the district will replace one part-time district aide position with the full-time administrator, who will support the fire prevention division. That job should open later this summer. The fuels mitigation manager position has been posted, along with that of the district fire

marshal, as Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard retired in early July after 10 years with MOFD.

The district brought on retired Alameda County Fire Department Deputy Chief Jim Call to supervise the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break program, a \$4 million state funded project to remove problem vegetation along a 14-mile stretch running along north Orinda and western Lafayette. Dennis Rein, the MOFD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, will see his hours increase through the

duration of the project as he helps Call supervise the program.

MOFD also promoted engineer and 10-year veteran Jacob Airola to captain June 6. Airola replaces Steve Gehling, who moved up to battalion chief in April. "I have been very fortunate to have great mentors throughout my career," Airola said. "I'm excited for the opportunity to work in a new capacity in this community."

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

*10k race goes around the Reservoir.
Live Music • Healthy Lifestyles Fair
LafayetteChamber.org/ResRun



Firefighters prepare to execute a controlled burn as part of the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break.

Photo courtesy MOFD

MOFD profile rising statewide as Cal Fire ups mitigation funding

By Nick Marnell

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, observing how the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has managed the \$4 million North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break mitigation project, has not only

offered high praise for MOFD but backed it up by giving the district more money for additional wild-fire fuel mitigation. The NOSEB, a 1,500-acre, 19-mile state funded effort to reduce dangerous fuels along open space areas, extends along a ridge between Tilden Park and Acalanes High School.

Particularly impressive to Cal Fire is the job the district does to update the public on the progress of the fuel break. Cal Fire Assistant Deputy Chief Angie Lottes said that tracking progress has been difficult from a data reporting perspective for most of the

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MOFD profile rising statewide as Cal Fire ups mitigation funding

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35 Community Wildfire Prevention & Mitigation Projects that Cal Fire has funded in 2019, but she praised the public outreach of MOFD. The district posts a link to a weekly update on its website, with tabbed sec-

tions covering basic information, the timeline, work progress and plenty of photos of the undertaking.

Fire Chief Dave Winnacker had assured Cal Fire that the fuel break project will be largely completed by the Dec. 31 deadline, and he told Jake

Hess, Cal Fire Santa Clara Unit chief, that if there was any extra money available from other state projects, MOFD could take it on. "Up to an additional \$2 million," Winnacker said.

Hess came through with \$250,000, which MOFD will use for tree removal in Tilden Park

and at the San Pablo Reservoir drainage area, between Briones Park and the south finger of the reservoir. "He has been a phenomenal partner, who has advocated for this project as if it were his own," Winnacker said of the Cal Fire unit chief.

Lottes noted that only one

other state mitigation project – the North Fork American River Fuel Break – was using as many private contractors all at one time as MOFD, and she again praised the district project management. "We might consider using MOFD as a model," Lottes said.

MOFD conducts first controlled burn exercise in Moraga



Photography by David Grube for John Muir Land Trust, © 2019

By Nick Marnell

Still frightened by the 2018 grass fire near Buckingham Drive, Moraga residents questioned the timing and the safety of a controlled burn conducted by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District on property recently purchased in the town by the John Muir Land Trust.

As residents complained on social media about a controlled fire going out of control, MOFD was pulling together a 30-person team from its district, the Berkeley Fire Department, the East Bay Regional Park District and the Concord Federal Fire Department to conduct a controlled burn and training exercise along the eastern slope of Painted Rock. The trust requested that MOFD conduct the exercise as a safety precaution, and the prescribed burn was set for June 29. "We heard a lot from homeowners

in the area that fire was a real concern. So we wanted to make sure we got off on the right foot," said Glen Lewis of JMLT.

MOFD Battalion Chief Steve Gehling, the incident commander, conducted a 9 a.m. burn briefing at Fire Station 42 and detailed the eight-page incident action plan to the participants. "This has never been done in Moraga," Gehling told the crews. "This is a big deal for us to show residents that it can be done safely and without damage to the community."

Crews atop Painted Rock tested the weather and air quality, and then conducted a small test fire, which Gehling explained was to determine how fast the fire would travel that day and how much vegetation could be burned at one time – so as to not upset the nearby neighbors. ... continued on Page A9

MOFD conducts first controlled burn exercise in Moraga



Photography by David Grube for John Muir Land Trust, © 2019

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At 11:30 a.m., Gehling approved the test results and the exercise began.

An unusual sight was firefighters setting fires, as they poured a mixture of diesel fuel and gasoline onto the brush. Even more unusual was to see

firefighters making no attempt to extinguish the fires. "The fire will put itself out," Gehling said. "If done right, this is very easy to do."

The steep terrain proved anything but easy for the fire crews. But plenty of safety precautions were in place, as a hose line circled the perimeter of the exercise, and the Berkeley engine trailed along the ridge to protect the back end, toward Buckingham. Two 2,500-gallon water tenders sat nearby and Medic 41 was parked at the top of the hill, just in case.

The exercise began slowly, but once it became obvious that the "safety strip" – the black path that remained after incineration – was able to hold off the oncoming fires, crews began taking out bigger chunks of vegetation as they moved down the hill toward Moraga

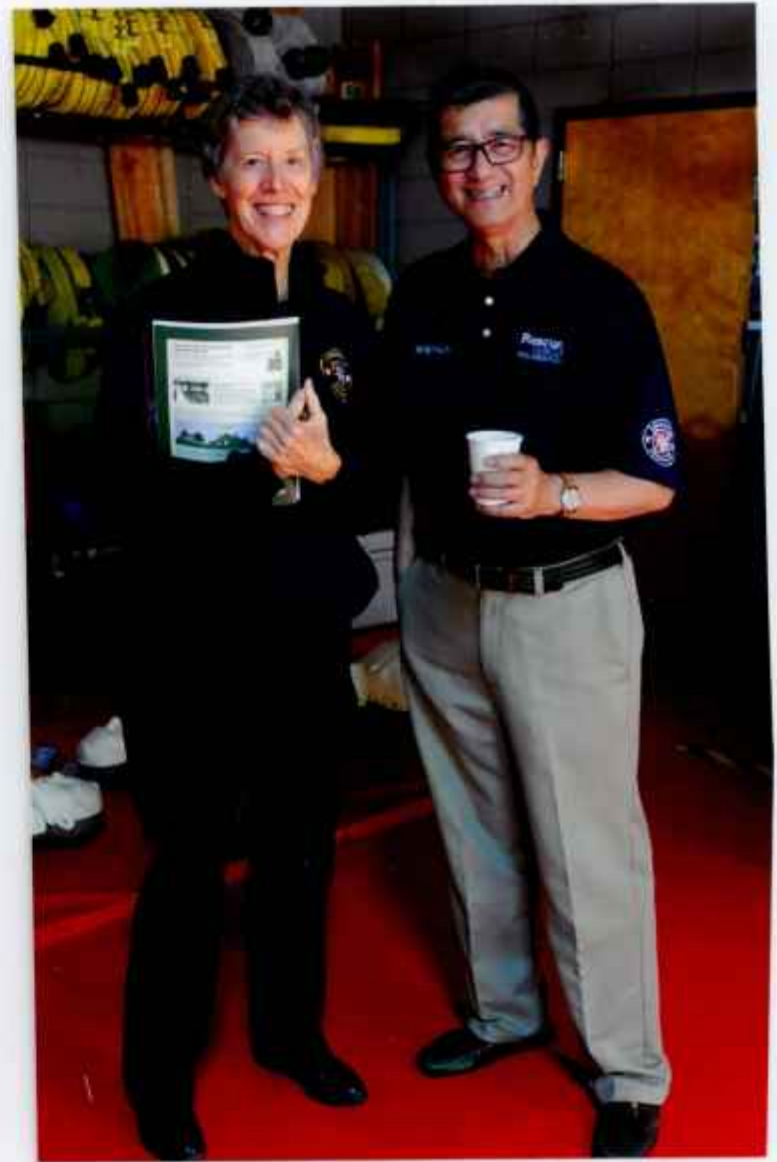
Road.

Lafayette resident Jerry Kent watched the proceedings from the Campolindo High School parking lot. "It's a smart move, to do this with the fire department here and things under control," Kent said. "I saw this hill burn last year when it was out of control."

By mid-afternoon, a 5-acre, 1,100 foot strip of the 15-acre property was completely charred. Gehling reported that no one was hurt and that he had heard no complaints of smoke drifting into the neighborhoods. "They did exactly what they said they were going to do, and did it very cautiously," Lewis said of the firefighters.

"We can use this tool to make the community safer," Gehling said. "The black part of that hill will not burn the rest of this year."

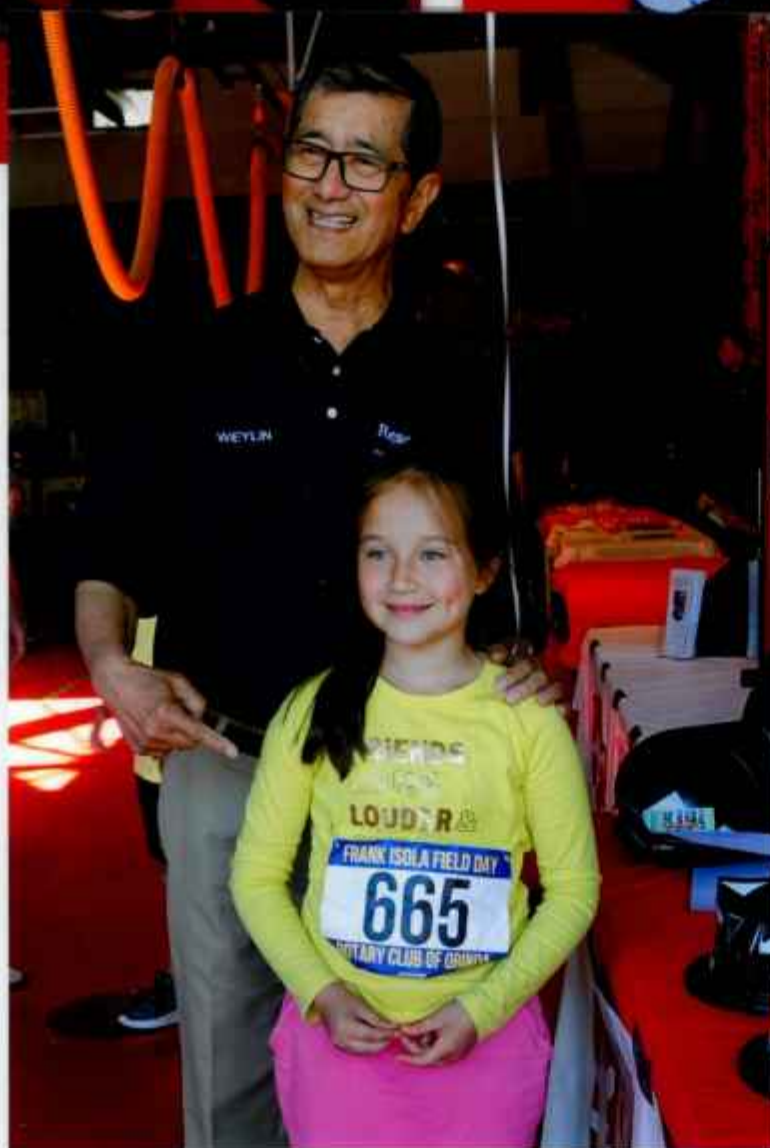
July 2020



MOFD
Open House
Fall - 2019



Open House
Hall - 2019



RESIDENTS FORCED TO LEAVE

Wildfire prompts 140 evacuations in Moraga

Fire officials have the blaze mostly contained by Oct. 10

By George Kelly, Annie Sciacca and Rick Hurd
Staff writers

MORAGA » A fast-moving wildfire that swept through the hills and prompted middle-of-the-night evacuations from 140 homes had been contained and was no longer a threat to houses or businesses by late morning Oct. 10, authorities said.

Fire crews had contained 80% of the fire and had a line all the way around it, ensuring it wouldn't spread any further, Moraga-Orinda Fire District spokesperson Dennis Rein said.

Authorities also allowed residents in about all but 30 homes to return by 11 a.m. The residents who still were evacuated Oct. 10 live on Merrill Circle, Rein said, and were forced to wait longer because of the fire equipment that remained on the street.

"We're going to get them back as soon as possible," Rein said.

The blaze broke out shortly before 1 a.m., and crews responded to Merrill Circle North, just south of Saint Mary's College. Original reports indicated a wildfire ignited on a steep slope near the gated community of Sanders Ranch.

About 150 firefighters responded to the blaze, and officials said they were able to stop its progress at 60 acres, with 60% of the blaze contained by 4 a.m.

Additional fire engines and water tenders provided from the Cal Fire and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District allowed fire crews to get to the blaze quickly and prevent a more devastating result, Rein



KARL MONDON — STAFF

Firefighters climb a steep hill extinguishing hot spots after a wildfire threatened homes in Moraga last week.

said. He also credited residents for complying with the evacuation orders.

"It was really a team effort," Rein said. "The residents do a great job of preparing their defensible space by cutting back weeds and dry brush. They evacuated when they were supposed to so the firefighters weren't forced to find people who had decided to ignore the order. They were able to get to fighting the fire quickly. Plus we had many additional resources that were ready to go."

The cause of the fire has not been determined, he said. Fire crews from various agencies were expected to start investigating Oct. 10 after the sun came up.

The fire came amid strong, dry wind gusts that caused red-flag conditions and brought a planned power shutdown by PG&E. It grew quickly, reaching 40 acres in less than an hour.

Just before 2 a.m., with flames approaching the back fences of homes along Merrill Road, Moraga police issued the evacuation order. Less than two hours earlier, PG&E shut down power in the area — part of a wave of planned power outages across the Bay Area aimed at preventing wildfires amid red-flag warning weather conditions.

The warning went out on the county's Community Warning System.

"Due to a fast-moving

fire, an immediate evacuation has been ordered for the Sanders Ranch neighborhood in Moraga," officials said in a statement issued through Contra Costa County's community warning system.

"Residents along Sanders Ranch Road, Merrill Drive and Harrington Road should evacuate now."

"Take only those essential items you have ready and can carry with you," the alert added.

"Stay off the phone unless you need to report a life-threatening emergency at your location."

Evacuated residents were told to go to St. Monica's Church in Moraga at 1001 Camino Pablo. That church

didn't have power and used candles and flashlights.

Dozens of evacuees gathered in the church's "peace room," drinking and eating snacks around tables while they waited for word from Moraga police about when they can go back home.

"Honestly, it made it more difficult," Moraga Police Chief Jon King said of the power shutoff. "We rely a lot on technology."

With no light and spotty cell service, the evacuations were a challenge, King said, adding that police, firefighters and fellow neighbors went door to door to make sure residents got out.

No injuries were reported, and no homes were damaged.

Jerry Yanowitz, who lives on Merrill Circle, said he evacuated about 1:30 a.m. after a neighbor knocked on the door. They could see the flames from the window and evacuated within minutes, taking just some medicine, a computer and a phone charger.

He said the power outage made it difficult to evacuate and alert neighbors. With everyone's power out, he said, it was hard to tell who was home and who already had left.

"It was scary," Yanowitz said.

Contact George Kelly at 510-208-6488, Annie Sciacca at 925-943-8073 and Rick Hurd at 925-945-4789.

How prepositioning of fire resources saved homes in Moraga's Sanders Ranch

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker did not mince words as he discussed the successful containment of the Oct. 10 Merrill Fire, which threatened 140 residences in southern Moraga in the middle of the night.

"The availability of prepositioned resources was critical to protecting homes and stopping the spread of this fire," Winnacker said.

Prepositioned resources are fire agency assets, including equipment, suppression personnel and dispatchers, placed on standby during heightened fire risks, such as after the forecast of an extreme weather event. The prepositioning allows instant response to an incident, since the strike teams are already assembled and ready to roll.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has long used prepositioning. The state allocated \$25 million annually for the prepositioning of local resources after a 2018 presentation to a senate committee by former Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman, who illustrated that, with wildfires becoming larger and more ferocious every year, the state's mutual aid system was not able to cope.

Carman said that at the start of the 2017 Napa and Southern California wildfires, ConFire had resources ready to go, but the district was unable to send crews or engines for hours because it had not received an official order. "That was as frustrating as you can imagine," Carman told the committee. "The system became overwhelmed."

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services funds and coordinates local prepositioning efforts. Once the National Weather Service issued an Oct. 8 warning for high temperatures, strong winds and low humidity, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company followed up with a threat of a power shutoff for many Northern Californians, ConFire Deputy Chief Aaron McAlister, the operational area coordinator, sent a request to OES for the prepositioning of five engine companies, two water tenders, three chief officers, an extra dispatcher and a bulldozer. He quickly received an approval, which included the redeployment of several Cal Fire hand crews.



Photo courtesy MOFD

The prepositioning was set for 8 p.m. Oct. 9. MOFD prepositioned an engine company, a water tender and a chief officer, and the personnel moved into "wherever we could find the space," said Battalion Chief Matt Nichols, the Merrill Fire incident commander. The water tender crew slept on mattresses on the floor at Fire Station 44.

No one had long to wait. About five hours after the start of prepositioning came a dispatch for a vegetation fire in southern Moraga, threatening homes in the Sanders Ranch neighborhood. "When that fire took off, I was on the phone, the radio, the computer, pushing resources to the incident," McAlister said.

Prepositioned resources fought the Merrill Fire for six hours, as did the five MOFD on-duty engine companies, as well as mutual aid respondents from neighboring agencies, including strike teams from Alameda and Solano counties. Numerous officials confirmed that upwards of 150 suppression personnel fought the wildfire at the height of the incident.

By late morning the fire was contained and though threatened, no structures were damaged, nor was anyone injured. "We had things in place. We had the right formula and we were able to over-

whelm the incident," McAlister said.

The deputy chief acknowledged the fire service personnel who challenged themselves and bought into the idea of doing things differently. He echoed the words of Winnacker on the effect the prepositioned resources had in the containment of the Moraga fire. "Those assets made a major difference," McAlister said.



Photo courtesy ConFire

Crisp, fresh look for redesigned MOFD website



Screen shot of the website

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District unveiled its upgraded public website in early February with a fresh, con-

temporary design that should be much easier to navigate, especially by visitors with disabilities.

Gloriann Sasser, MOFD administrative services director, oversaw the website redesign, and pointed out

some of the features of the new site. Five tabs on the home page cover basic district categories, and five large buttons on that same page direct visitors to frequently requested areas, such as meeting agendas, plan submissions and career information.

"The website will also work on phones and tablets," Sasser said, and she noted that the site complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Coming up with a plan to bring the website up to current ADA standards was the most challenging part of the job, according to Rachel Schultz, project manager for Granicus, the digital technology company that redid the MOFD website. Granicus designed the much-heralded website of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

"Photos, maps, graphics and other

images on the website have tags written into the code that have description or text equivalents of the material being visually conveyed," said Schultz, explaining that this will permit users who rely on screen readers to navigate the content. The MOFD website also incorporates contrast checkers to aid users with visual color impairments, and the site allows visitors to access all information using a keyboard.

The district will pay Granicus \$28,000 over five years, which includes the development and hosting of the website, plus regular maintenance. "We continually update the software, and we do annual health checks, to make sure the district stays up to date in ADA compliance," Schultz said. "We also update the analytics on the visitors to the site."