



Grant Awarded To Fire District

By Sophie Braccini

Gordon Nathan has become a pro at extinguishing fires.

The Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Training program's Instructor Coordinator has practiced that skill for years as part of preparedness instruction. So on the evening of February 14th, he and his group of CERT trainees were ready when the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) got a new unit that exactly simulates the conditions to put out a fire and they were eager to try it.

"I saw this Intelligent Training System (ITS) in operation last year," says Nathan, "but neither CERT nor the MOFD had the money to purchase the \$9,000 unit." The MOFD applied for and won a grant. "MOFD just received an ITS unit that incorporates both a fire extinguisher and the fire burner," explains Bryan Collins Battalion Chief / Operations for MOFD, "It includes sensors that analyzes the angle of attack of the stream coming from

the extinguisher and the length of the spraying." If the operation is not done properly, or for long enough, the fire will re-ignite.

"One of the advantages of this unit compared to the real extinguishers," explains Nathan, "is that it allows the instructor to put out the fire with the release of a single button, in case of emergency." The system uses a mix of water and compressed air so there are no more emissions or residue, no spray in the air. The system is rechargeable, can be set up in minutes and the fire is generated by propane gas as a fuel.

"MOFD is proud to have been selected to receive that important Fire Safety and Citizen Preparedness item through a grant process," adds Collins, "MOFD was one of four agencies to receive this equipment, and is proud to share it with the community."

MOFD will utilize this new equipment for comprehensive public education and outreach in-



Captain Sean Perkins from MOFD teaches a group of CERT volunteers how to extinguish a fire using the ITS

Photo Gordon Nathan

cluding training the public in the proper use of portable fire extinguishers. Besides supporting CERT training, "we will have the unit available during our open house and during safety fairs," says Collins, "we hope to take it to high schools to train our youth."

The "ITS Bullex Fire Extin-

guisher Demonstration Unit" was received through the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department, which secured the grant funding from the Federal Department of Homeland Security Super Urban Area Security Initiative (SUASI), for which they are the administrator in the Contra Costa County Operational Area.