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Orinda Police use GoFundMe to buy a drone



Drone demonstration

Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Somewhat surprised Orinda city council members were treated to a first-ever indoor flight of a drone in the Library Auditorium as Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel and Contra Costa Sheriff's Officer Joe Ladner gave a demonstration with a drone similar to the one that is proposed for the Orinda Police Department. Nagel explained that in his continuing effort to obtain the best supplies and equipment to police Orinda, his department started a GoFundMe campaign last year to raise money for the purchase of a drone. Within just a couple of months, the community responded favorably and more than enough money was raised to purchase a drone with all of the capabilities that the chief believes the department needs.

The drone, which will cost approximately \$4,000, will be used, for example, at times when the sheriff's helicopter is not available. Unlike a helicopter, the drone flies so high up that it cannot be heard or seen from the ground. However, the chief assured the council that it will not be used for routine surveillance, which would violate the existing sheriff's policy on drone use. As well, it would not even be possible, he said, as the drone battery only lasts about 30 minutes.

Part of the presentation included footage from Lafayette's drone, which responded to an incident at the Orinda BART station when two thieves snatched a laptop and took off into the hills, where they could not be followed in a vehicle. The drone was able to locate the two men, who were then success-

fully arrested by OPD officers.

Drones must be operated by certified pilots. Ladner is one of 20 sheriff's officers currently certified, and it is expected that more officers will become certified as well. In addition, Nagel would like every officer to be trained as a "spotter," an officer who looks out for other aircraft. The drone is small and can be kept in a backpack in a police vehicle, thus readily available when the need arises. The drone will be owned by the city, and will be operated according to sheriff policy. The drone will be a one-time purchase, funded with the money raised from the public. Maintenance costs are low. For example, replacement blades costs about \$10 each. The drone should not require replacement for at least three or four years.

The drone will also have a public address system, so it could be used to alert the public in the event of a dangerous situation. It will be equipped with an HDMI port and will broadcast on a secured network to police computers and perhaps to other devices as well.

The council was enthusiastic. Council Member Nick Kosla described the purchase as "a big bang for your buck," and Council Member Amy Worth was impressed with the technology that can improve safety in the community, including use for search and rescue as well as crime fighting. Council Member Darlene Gee thought it was the best demonstration since she's been on the council.

North Orinda fire evacuation drill runs smoothly

... continued from Page A6

Community volunteers from both Lamorinda CERT and the Lamorinda Radio Interest Group were used in this drill, as they had been in the earlier drill. The volunteers were deployed along with professional first responders to provide traffic safety and help collect data along the evacuation routes.

The first pulse of evacuating cars at 7:09 a.m. was led out by a fire engine. The evacuation was fast and smooth, and those cars reached the freeway at 7:18 a.m. The difference between this drill and the earlier drill along Moraga Way was that this drill covered more ground more quickly. All

evacuees were out of the area well before 8 a.m., when Miner Road was restored to its usual two-way flow.

According to Rein, the Evacuation Decision Support System being developed by MOFD was also tested that morning. This was the first full-cycle, field test of the tool. Beginning with a small fire detection, modeling potential fire spread, recommending evacuation areas and finally maintaining a common operating picture for fire, law enforcement and community warning was an amazing success. MOFD looks forward to future developments and implementation. The drill was recorded by a drone as part of this system and the first pulse of the evacuation

was also recorded from the leading fire engine.

Other observers and participants that Rein identified included the Office of Emergency Services, the Moraga and Lafayette police departments, MOFD's Communications-Support Unit, the Reno Fire Department and the Kensington-El Cerrito CERT. Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel said during the debriefing that there actually was an incident on the evacuation route during the drill: a car stalled and the evacuation team was able to quickly figure out how to continue the drill. The drill, he said, was really important, and so much was learned.

Video of the drill captured by the drone and from the fire engine is available to view on the MOFD website at www.mofd.org/announcements/north-orinda-evacuation-exercise-update.

Orinda Union School District Registration Information

Transitional Kindergarten and kindergarten registration for children entering an Orinda public school in August will open be on the following dates:
Wednesday, Feb. 6 Thursday, Feb. 7

Visit www.orindaschools.org to register online
Kindergarten students must be at least 5 years of age on or before Sept. 1, and if a child has their fifth birthday between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2, they are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten.
For additional information regarding registration instructions, please check the OUSD website: www.orindaschools.org

Dysport Day

at Kelly Hood MD
February 28

All proceeds will be directly donated to Lafayette Rotary Club/New Day For Children. As we make you feel better, you can help smooth out the life of a young girl.



If you would like to participate in this fundraiser, please call Kelly Hood MD at 925-283-5500.

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ORINDA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Volunteers needed for Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee

The Independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) will:

- Inform the public about expenditures of bond proceeds from recently passed Measures E & I.
- Review expenditures to ensure bond proceeds are spent for authorized purposes.
- Provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees at a public meeting.

CBOC Member Terms and Meeting Information

Terms of service are two years, and no CBOC member may serve more than three consecutive terms. CBOC meetings must occur at least once per year and will not exceed quarterly.

Committee Representation

The CBOC will include seven (7) total members:

- Business organization (1)
- Taxpayers organization (1)
- Senior citizens organization (1)
- Parent/guardian of a student enrolled in OUSD (1)
- Parent/guardian of a student enrolled in OUSD who is active in support of the District (1)
- Community at large (2)

More Information

For more information or to request an application, contact Debbie Jamieson at djamieson@orindaschools.org or by phone at (925) 258-6201. **Deadline to apply is 4:30 p.m. on March 4, 2019.**