

# Moraga learns lessons during The Great ShakeOut

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Millions of people around the world practiced their skills on Oct. 19, hoping to be ready in the event of a major earthquake. The town of Moraga joined in with government agencies, schools, and other organizations in the U.S., Canada, and other countries.

The scenario for Moraga was a 7.2 Earthquake struck the Hayward Fault near Berkeley at around 10 a.m. The quake lasted about a minute and a half and caused major damage in Moraga. As the drill continued, Moraga Police Chief Jon King added reports of major incidents, including a ruptured gas line and fire at the Moraga Center, power outages, landslides, broken buildings and roads. Schools needed to release students to their parents, and needed to know what to do with children whose parents could not be reached.

In major disasters, it is usual that normal means of communications fail, such as telephones and the internet. In order to assure that the area can maintain communications through radios, the Lamorinda Area Radio Inter-

est Group (LARIG) was asked to set up a radio communications drill in the Moraga Public Works Department. The drill was scheduled for 10:19 a.m. Unfortunately, many Californians were awakened at 3:19 a.m. when the alert was erroneously sent out by the MyShake App seven hours early. MyShake apologized for the glitch, and promised that it will not happen next year.

But at 10:19 a.m. the alert did go out across the Bay Area. LARIG began its drill, reaching out on the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), using its repeater located in the Berkeley Hills, calling for people to radio in their positions. About two dozen people responded, throughout Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga. In addition to the volunteer radio groups, the town owns about 20 radios and maintains a radio channel

for Public Works.

However, the radio system failed when it came to contacting the schools in Moraga. Moraga School District Superintendent Julie Parks later reported that, although they could clearly hear the radio transmissions, for an unknown reason they were unable to respond.

After the exercise, Chief King conducted a "hot wash," where participants get together and discuss when worked, and what didn't work, and what can be improved for the future. Some suggestions for improvement included the need for more interactive incident tracking, and King said that WebEOC has that capacity. WebEOC is a secure, internet-based emergency information management application that provides real-time information sharing of opera-

tional details from various government and public safety groups in response to an imminent threat, emergency or disaster.

Emergency supplies are kept in a trailer on town property, and it was discovered that the contact information stored in the trailer was not as up-to-date as needed. It was also determined that Moraga needs a copy machine in the town offices, and that the trailer needs refreshed maps, forms, dry erase boards, and message pads. A resources list should include contact information for local businesses, schools and churches.

King wrapped up the exercise by saying that the town would try another such exercise in 8 to 12 weeks, to retest with improvements in place.

## Letters to the editor

### Litter lessens beauty and causes issues for the Earth

Once a year there is a Coastal Clean-up. This year it took place from 9 a.m. to noon on Sept. 23 and was sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Creeks.

I was inspired by the number of volunteers who attended. They came from Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda and worked very hard on cleaning up the areas around San Pablo Creek and Orinda, downtown parking lots.

I was disheartened by the amount of litter, including cigarette butts that were removed. There was also a tire, oil and a toy car that were left

at the creek.

There are facilities that will recycle tires, oil, and other unwanted items. As the saying goes: "Just Google It" for where to take the items. Let's make Lamorinda litter free communities.

I believe once the litter hits the ground, it is everyone's responsibility to pick it up. The problem with litter is it does not stay where it falls but is transported by wind to our storm drains, creeks and eventually travels to the Bay and the ocean. We can do this!

Toris Jaeger  
Orinda

### Crosses serve a purpose

I have heard complaints of the crosses that dot the hillside next to the Lafayette BART station, and an ongoing movement to take them down.

Some claim that they have served their purpose and that they are now just an "eyesore." But as American citizens we have a duty to remember and respect those who have died in service of our country. The crosses on the hillside represent those

soldiers who have fallen in Iraq and Afghanistan, and while the U.S has withdrawn, those lives should never be forgotten. Removing the memory of those who fought for our country, in an attempt to beautify a hill in Lafayette lacks respect. Furthermore, it is only a singular hill, one of few memorials we have in the Lamorinda area. And one of fewer still that directly commemorates the United States' most recent conflict. Yet these crosses are more than just the

memory of a singular war, they exemplify Lamorindians gratitude to our veterans and active duty personnel in addition to those who perished and must never be forgotten.

Cooper Chang  
Moraga

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# Engineering Services Manager returns to council with Pathways Project update

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Fire Marshall Chris Bachman said he preferred a design that allows fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to travel on the left side of the road in any direction and have all the cars pull to the right side. With the construction of the center median pathway, some of that access for cars to provide more space for emergency vehicles would be compromised, especially in the southern portion of the pathway. Lafayette Police Chief Ben Alldritt said his primary concerns were emergency evacuations during which people would be heading from the southbound side toward the freeway (not past or away from it).

The real time-consuming aspect, Luttropp said, was to contact Caltrans. The city engineering staff and council members Teresa Gerring and Susan Candell met with Greg Currey, the Caltrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Branch Chief for District 4. They reviewed the project's various

configurations and Currey was in favor of the ideas presented, including the center median pathway, an east side pathway with and without signalized on and off ramps, elimination of slip lanes at Mt. Diablo and Pleasant Hill Road, and installation of raised crosswalks at the on- and off-ramps. He indicated that Caltrans would only conduct one courtesy review of the project and after that, any further reviews would need to be part of a formal encroachment permit application after the project plans are 100% completed.

The process for obtaining the permit was confirmed by Caltrans staff and would require considerable time and a document explaining how and why the plan deviates from Caltrans' standards — the pathway plan does differ in multiple ways — which could impact approval of the project. Email correspondence with Mark Wong, project manager for Caltrans, indicated the Highway Operations office would ask for extensive information related to the idea of signaling the Highway 24 on-

off ramps. Luttropp said that caused him to be notably concerned, because heavy traffic in the area often has cars on the ramps backing up onto Pleasant Hill Road. Luttropp said a study about the matter would cost about \$30,000.

Luttropp said no additional information was anticipated and the alternatives remain viable. He invited input and direction from the council.

Council Member Gina Dawson asked about the median not meeting Caltrans' standard width. Luttropp said near Mt. Diablo Boulevard, the median on Pleasant Hill Road is the standard 12 feet wide, but under the freeway it dips down to 7 feet and then down to 4 feet in some areas.

"The beautiful thing is that if we do the center median project, we have a 12-foot median," he said.

In addition to council's extended discussion, public comment on the project had residents encouraging the city to do more research and acquire additional input from the local community about the

project. The suggested alternative solutions short of constructing a center median were numerous.

Council's closing conversation involved whether or not to pursue one of the design alternatives now, if traffic signals should or should not be included and studied, could the design plans they are con-

sidering be made more robust, and the efficacy of staff making an attempt to gain access to CCTA's vision of the Pleasant Hill Road corridor and what that might mean in terms of funding. They voted unanimously to carry the matter forward and asked staff to bring another updated report to the Nov. 13 meeting.

## Res Runners show up for each other

By Sharon K. Sobotta

More than 2,000 runners, walkers and strollers filled the drizzly streets of downtown Lafayette for the Lafayette Res Run Oct. 22, along with dozens of four-legged furry family members. Thirteen-year-old Caden Ehrhorn, an eighth-grader at Stanley Middle School ran the 5K in 17 minutes and 14 seconds, which made him the first student in the district to put his foot over the finish line, and put him in third place overall. "It felt really good because I improved from last year," Caden said. "This was my third time at the Res Run. It's great to have so many people out here. It shows that we have a big community of people that we can rely on." Abbie and Dave Ehrhorn beamed with pride, as their pet Ruby wagged her tail, while posing for a picture. "I love living and working here," Abbie Ehrhorn, who is also a teacher at Burton Valley, said. "It's such a special place." Dave Ehrhorn was at the Res Run to cheer on his son Caden, but he couldn't help noticing who showed up. "It's great to see so many teachers and administrators out here supporting the kids," he said. "I really hope that the teachers in the district get the raise they're asking for."



Photo Sharon Sobotta

Third place winner, Stanley Middle School student Caden Ehrhorn, with his parents Abbie and Dave, and dog Ruby.

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