

Two school lockdowns in Orinda after burglary, bomb threat in same week

By Sora O'Doherty

Usually calm Orinda found two of its schools caught up in lockdown events during the week of Nov. 12. On Tuesday, a home invasion robbery on Moraga Way resulted in a massive response from the Orinda Police Department as well as support from surrounding agencies.

Two suspects were ar-

rested at or near the scene, and Glorietta Elementary School, although a couple of miles from the crime scene, was placed on lockdown in case the third suspect might try to take cover there. Orinda Union School District Superintendent Aida Glimme reported that all the protocols that have been put in place for school safety

worked perfectly, and the communications with Orinda Police Chief Ryan Sullivan were excellent.

Then, in an unrelated incident, Miramonte High School had to be evacuated the following day. Principal Ben Campopiano reported that at 4:15 p.m. the OPD received a telephone call from an uniden-

tified individual who stated that a bomb had been placed in a bathroom at the school. OPD immediately notified Miramonte administration, who evacuated the school facilities.

Students and families were on campus for after-school activities, including the NorCal Championship Water Polo matches. After a search of the

campus and an investigation into the anonymous call, OPD confirmed at 5 p.m. that there was no threat to the campus, and all activities, including the boys and girls water polo matches, could safely resume. Campopiano thanked local law enforcement for their quick and effective response to the situation.

Canyon fire re-ignites community action

By Chris Lavin



The Nov. 1 Canyon fire leveled this home. Photo Chris Lavin

In the aftermath of the three-alarm fire that suddenly broke out in Canyon last month, awakening residents – most of whom evacuated immediately to Pinehurst Road and beyond – the community is now coming together to hone battle plans for what may come.

“It’s not a matter of whether it will happen again, it’s a matter of when it will happen again,” said Jamie Barret Riley, president of the Canyon Community Association, at a meeting Nov. 6. About 70 people attended the emotionally charged meeting. “Everyone should be prepared.”

The fire on the night of

Nov. 1 burned one house to the ground within minutes, and threatened nearby houses and the entire unincorporated area, then in dry conditions. Twenty-seven emergency vehicles from five departments responded to the 10 p.m. fire, including Moraga-Orinda Fire District, ConFire, CalFire, EBMUD, East Bay Regional Parks and Oakland Fire Department. The cause of the fire is “undetermined,” said MOFD Battalion Chief Lucas Lambert, the commander at the scene, but started in the house.

Its sole resident at the time, Kathleen Mantha, arrived home with her house already ablaze.

Dylan Huber, her next-door neighbor, was the first to respond. Shortly after Huber’s slipped feet hit the ground, Casey Swanson and his son Orion were driving home from soccer tryouts when Orion told his dad to stop. Swanson jumped out of his car to help Huber while Orion ran up the road to knock on every door he could find.

An immediate evacuation became apparent, with neighbors checking on neighbors and residents staging cars on Ridgecrest Road for a possible trip down through Indian Valley and into Moraga, as egress through Pinehurst likely was blocked.

“The first thing I did was bang on two walls that were not yet on fire, yelling her (Mantha’s) name,” Huber said. When he determined no one was inside, he grabbed a shovel and other tools to try to extinguish the flames. “I looked up and it was suddenly, just, huge. I don’t know how high it was. But you can’t see the top of a ball of flames.”

Neighbor George Schneller had spotted the large orange glow and immediately called 911. Soon, a handful of neighbors had joined the fight as others started to evacuate, with Schneller directing cars coming down near Canyon’s post office onto the old railroad tracks as emergency vehicles had blocked the direct way out. Spot fires progressing up the hillside were being put out by Canyon residents when firefighters arrived.

Canyon, the unincorporated community near Moraga that is home to roughly 215 humans and thousands of redwood and highly flammable bay trees, has seen fires in the past. Those who evacuated the scene recalled helping to fight the Oakland Hills Fire in 1991, when it threatened to come down toward Orinda through Indian Valley.

“I’ve fought some,” said longtime resident Ian Llewellyn, holding up four fingers.

At the community meeting following the fire, residents related their experiences and many said they were glad they had “go bags,” or emergency bags by the door holding their most important valuables and papers. “Everybody should have one,” said Karen Pickett, the association vice president.

The community also talked about what didn’t go right. Why weren’t the town’s sirens set off? Why did the

emergency phone tree fall apart? Protocol for the sirens has been changed: Now they mean go out and see what’s going on. And many residents who had their phones turned off for sleeping that night decided to figure out how to get immediate neighbors added to their “emergency” call list.

“It was a good exercise for everyone, unfortunately,” Chief Huber said. “Canyon is a great community. Everyone really came together that night.”

Huber, the first resident responder to the fire, said his wife felt badly about taking their two children and leaving him behind.

“She did all the right things,” he said, shaking his head. “I did all the stupid ones.”

Chris Lavin is a resident of Canyon. She and her husband evacuated safely along with all other Canyon residents who either evacuated or sheltered in place.

Public Safety

Emergency response:
 Emergency: 24 Hours 911
 Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010
 Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
 Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt 925-299-3221
 Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com
 Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department:
 329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
 Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
 22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
 Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan 925-254-6820
 Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Incident Summary

Report Oct. 29 - Nov. 11
 Alarms 35
 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 17
 Traffic 128
 Suspicious Circumstances 9
 Suspicious Subject 18
 Suspicious Vehicle 1
 Service to Citizen 35
 Patrol Req./Security Check 14
 Public/School Assembly Check 7
 Supplemental Report 19
 Vacation House Check 27
 Welfare Check 20
 Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations
 Accident Property Police Department
 Auto Burglary
 3900 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 90 Block Silverwood Dr.
 Dui Misd
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Hit And Run Misdemeanor
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)
 800 Block Reliez Station Rd.
 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Ace Hardware
 Reckless Driving
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Valley Rd.
 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
 Old Tunnel Rd./Windsor Dr.
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 St Marys Rd./Rohrer Dr.
 Oak Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Tc - Property Damage
 500 Block St. Mary's Rd.
 Police Department
 3300 Block Springhill Rd.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Leslyn Dr./Goyak Dr.
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Condit Rd.
 900 Block Hawthorn Dr.
 Reliez Station Rd./Beechwood Dr. (2)
 Moraga Rd./Moraga Blvd.
 3900 Block S Peardale Dr.
 Trespass W/ Vehicle
 30 Block Lucas Ranch Ct.

Other criminal activity
 Burglary
 3900 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3900 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Commercial Burglary
 1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
 Fraud False Pretenses
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 900 Block Dewing Ave.
 3600 Block Robertson Rd.
 3100 Block Lucas Cir.
 40 Block Woodbury Highlands Pl.
 Grand Theft
 900 Block Village Center (2)
 Identity Theft
 1000 Block Manzana Pl.
 Petty Theft
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 1000 Block Brown Ave.
 Petty Theft Bicycle
 900 Block Village Center
 Shoplift
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
Nuisance to the Community
 Disturbance-domestic
 3600 Block Nordstrom Ln.
 Disturbing The Peace
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 1St St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Drunk In Public
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Loud Music
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Loud Noise
 Bickerstaff St./Dewing Ave.

Loud Party
 600 Block Lucas Dr.
 Public Nuisance
 3700 Block Highland Rd.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Garden Ln./Laurel Dr.
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Vandalism
 1400 Block Rancho View Dr.
 1000 Block Carol Ln.
 3900 Block Franke Ln.
 700 Block Tanglewood Ln.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Other
 Animal Cruelty
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 H&S - Possession Of Paraphernalia
 Happy Valley Rd./Deer Hill Rd.
 Panhandling
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Unwanted Guest
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Violation Custody Order
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary

Report Oct. 17 - Oct. 30
 Alarms 12
 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 0
 Traffic 46
 Suspicious Circumstances 3
 Suspicious Subject 3
 Suspicious Vehicle 7
 Service to Citizen 30
 Patrol Req./Security Check 17
 Public/School Assembly Check 4
 Supplemental Report 8
 Vacation House Check 0
 Welfare Check 5
 Ordinance Violation 1
Vehicle violations
 Accident Property
 Hodges Dr./Camino Pablo
 Campolindo High School
 Dui Misd
 St Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.
 Rheem Blvd./Glorietta Blvd., Ori
 Excessive Speed
 Rheem Blvd./Redwood Ln.
 St Marys Staging Area (2)
 St Marys Rd./Bollinger Canyon Rd. (2)
 Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.
 Moraga Rd./Moraga Way (2)
 Rheem Blvd./Fernwood Dr.
 Canyon Rd./Sanders Dr.
 Moraga Rd./Buckingham Dr. (3)
 Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd.
 Moraga Way/School St.
 St Marys College
 Library
 Reckless Driving
 Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr.
 Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute
 Fernwood Dr./Donald Dr.
 Tc - Property Damage
 Rheem Valley Shopping Center
Other criminal activity
 Forgery
 20 Block Echo Hill Ln.
 Identity Theft
 300 Block Fernwood Dr.
 1900 Block St Marys Rd.
 Petty Theft
 Safway
 Petty Theft From Veh
 Police Department
 Residential Burglary
 600 Block Augusta Dr.
 1700 Block St Andrews Dr.
Nuisance to the Community
 Loud Noise
 Hacienda
 Loud Party
 50 Block Campolindo Ct.
 100 Block Quintas Ln.
 Vandalism
 Joaquin Moraga Int School
 1100 Block Moraga Way
Other
 Animal Cruelty
 Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.
 Mentally Ill Commit
 Not Available
 100 Block Miramonte Dr.
 1900 Block Ascot Dr.
 Threats
 30 Block Freitas Dr.
 Trespass
 St Marys College (2)
 Trespass W/ Vehicle
 100 Block Moraga Rd.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back

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