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The Great ShakeOut fell on 35th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Julie Sparks

through the process of writing a situation report or an incident status summary. What worked well included communication sharing between the Comms Team and the Situation Unit, using colored dry erase markers and post it notes on a large laminated area map, and having two scribes, one to track all responses and the other to develop incident reports. Working together at an exercise to learn each other's capabilities, strengths, and vulnerabilities was also considered beneficial.

What could have been improved included having a backup for net control in case the primary loses their voice, GMRS radio users should identify themselves using their GMRS call sign phonetically, messages should be numbered and logged, and potentially have a priority listing for the FEMA ICS 213 form. Only one of the three antennas at the Sarge Littlehale room was functional.

Based on the exercise, it was recommended that there be further emergency training for Orinda city staff, testing whether or not running the generator would impact communications in the Sarge Littlehale room, and looking into the possibility of setting up WinLink, a digital messaging system that does not require internet.

International ShakeOut Day is every third Thursday of October. This annual date was selected back in 2009, when most schools agreed this was the best time. This year, nearly twenty million participants registered for the event around the world, which included over ten million in California, where ShakeOut began.

Al Archangel, President of LARIG, and Julie Sparks of MOFD contributed to this report.

35 years after the Loma Prieta earthquake, which caused numerous deaths and injuries and severe damage in Northern California, Lamorinda took part in The Great ShakeOut, an annual safety event observed around the world. On Oct. 17, the City of Orinda joined with the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Communications Support Team, the Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group (LARIG), and Lamorinda CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) for the exercise.

The objectives of the exercise include practicing personal preparedness, checking on communications equipment, establishing coordination and information sharing between the community, comms team, and the Orinda Emergency Operations Center.

At 9 a.m. a General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) radio station was set up in the Sarge Littlehale Room in Orinda City Hall. Radio equipment and incident command system supplies from the city were used in conjunction with personal handheld radios. The three Lamorinda radio GMRS radio repeaters were linked to extend signal strength.

In previous years, the objective of the exercise was to have people radio in reports to net control. This year, the exercise was expanded,

and now included communicating these reports to the city.

An announcement of a major earthquake was sent automatically through GMRS from a previously recorded digital message. It instructed participants to drop, cover, and hold on. Net control then asked for reports from participants. In addition to GMRS, Lamorinda HAM 440 frequencies were also monitored.

Net control, Jason Matthews, who also handled IT, received information and passed it on to the Orinda EOC Unit overseen by James Duff, Orinda's Wildfire Education and Outreach Coordinator. Carol Bergren and Michael Brown served as scribes, writing down the information received by radio. Wesley Ayers served as a runner.

Location information was mapped by Al Archangel and Daniel Lin. They also monitored HAM traffic. Julie Sparks of MOFD served as support and MOFD Deputy Chief Lucas Lambert, Battalion Chief Jon Bensley, and the crew of MOFD station 45 observed. MOFD Board Director Mike Roemer also observed the exercise.

Orinda Police Chief Anthony Rossi, with some OPD officers and new City Manager Linda Smith, were also in attendance.

Following the exercise, Bruce Macler walked the volunteers

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