

Local crisis first responders called out on bomb scare

ANDRÉ GENSBURGER
Clayton Pioneer

The Concord Corps Emergency Response Team of the Salvation Army, mostly goes unnoticed whenever there is a crisis. This was certainly the case during a recent bomb threat incident in Oakley on November 21, 2007, when a suspicious looking device was discovered atop a Winnebago parked in Knightsen. While the object later turned out to be nothing, the Emergency Response Team had been mobilized and was already on the way to the scene.

As part of the emergency response procedure, team member, Rich Lueck had quickly proceeded to the Corp headquarters to prepare the Canteen for response. The Canteen, a large kitchen on wheels, is used to help those people displaced by disasters, as well as to supply food and water to police and fire crews on the scene.

Members of the team include Salvation Army Major, Clayton resident Clay Gardner, Chuck Graham, Richard Lueck, and Fred Nelson, all of whom are members of the Clayton/Concord Sunrise Rotary Club, a service oriented

organization.

To do, however, far more than just serve food; the Emergency Response Team includes a coordinated ham radio group used for relaying communications between emergency services, should their regular lines of communication fail, as well as providing a means of communications for disaster victims to reach out of area relatives.

"One group goes to the Corp and gets the Canteen," said Chuck Graham, who is also a ham radio operator. "This group gets the Canteen ready while another group, out of the area, contacts the Incident Commander in order to calculate what might be needed in meal purchases and grocery shopping."

"The Canteen is pre-stocked for 100 meals - mostly canned/dry goods, while it sits at the Corp," said Rich Lueck.

"This year we've had about six call-outs," said Clay Gardner, Major at the Concord Salvation Army. "In my first year here we had fourteen, of which four were in the first month. These were mostly fires."

"We expected more call-outs this year," Lueck said, referring to the larger number of fires. "It did-



Photo courtesy of Rich Lueck

FIRST RESPONDERS FRED JORDAN, RICH LUECK, CHUCK GRAHAM AND MAJOR CLAY GARDNER stand in front of the Salvation Army's First Response Canteen.

n't happen, although we did offer our services during the recent Southern California wildfires."

"Our Canteen went to Texas during the Katrina disaster," Gardner said. "It sounds odd, but the Texas Canteen went to help the Katrina victims and ours went to help Texas. It was supposed to be for six weeks, but wound up

staying three months."

There are many Canteens throughout the state. Napa, Stockton, Sacramento, San Rafael, Santa Rosa all have Canteens, as does Petaluma. "They have a restored 1961 Dodge," Gardner said. "Three of the Canteens came to help at the memorial service for two firefighters that was held recently at The Sleep Train Pavilion in Clayton. They served water since it was mid-August and very hot."

Graham and Lueck, also train people interested in learning about ham radios, or getting their FCC license.

"The Major got me involved on the board a few years ago," Graham said, "and they wanted to get a response team put together along with a Ham Radio group, so I did it." Graham was interested in Ham Radios for forty years but had little time until his retirement.

"We meet monthly to discuss procedures, and we have a drill on

Monday nights where everyone checks in. This helps us know who is available. We have 35 members, and usually between 15 to 18 check in."

During the Loma Prieta earthquake, when the section of the 880 freeway collapsed, there were twenty ham radio volunteers coordinating. "Part of the problem," Graham said, "was finding the way to get to the collapsed section. The ham operators managed to get a police car to show the way."

"During the Oakland Hills fire, I was stationed in Hanford, and got the call," Gardner said. "We brought the Canteen and parked in the staging area to get our bearings. Then we went where the firefighters were, at the homes they managed to save. We went from police barricade to fire truck, feeding and caring for them."

"Eighty percent of the time we are called it's at night," Lueck said. "The Salvation Army does-

n't respond unless called out." This can result in delays for the team who are often ready to go once they learn of a problem, and yet must wait to be officially called.

None of these facts are usually reported by the media.

"It's hard to get good publicity," Gardner said. "People are just not aware of what really goes on and what the money gets used for. Nationwide, 190,000 people were served last year."

"It's like a big secret that needs to get out," Lueck said.

Always looking for new volunteer ham radio operators, Graham and Lueck will offer classes starting in mid-January. "At the end they take their ham radio license exam," Graham said. "Morse code is no longer used."

"We need more volunteers," Lueck said. "We need cooks, servers and other people in the event of a disaster."

"It would be nice to see more people from Clayton and Concord," Gardner said. "We have a lot of volunteers from outside the county."

Funding for the Canteen comes from the donations made to the Salvation Army, as well as from what the bell ringers bring in. The bell ringers are all volunteers and often run about 35 ringers on any given day.

"It's kettle season," Gardner added, referring to the red container used by the Salvation Army bell ringers. "There's a great reason to support the cause."

For more information on the Canteen program or ham radio classes, contact Chuck Graham, (925) 689-7640.

To donate to the Salvation Army Canteen program, mail your check to Salvation Army, 3950 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94521. Mark your check for "Canteen Program."

Park, from page A1

Pierce, "it was just a lot of things along the way."

City officials were reluctant to push the contractor for fear that the quality of the work would suffer. "We didn't want to rush it just to meet an arbitrary date of Dec. 1," said Councilmember Dave Shuey. "To meet that date, we would have to potentially skimp on quality."

"However," he added, "clearly from the lay person's point of view, the project was not staffed as completely as it should have been. This was the contractor's choice."

The contract to build the park was awarded last March to JFC Construction, a Martinez firm, and set the completion date for the end of October. With the most recent delays, the

park is now running about 10 weeks behind schedule.

The city may recover some costs from the contractor in the form of penalties. "We are clearly past the original completion date," Shuey said, "and there is a liquidated damages clause in the contract that we will be discussing with the contractor."

On the other hand," continued Shuey, "we're very excited by what we see. It's going to be a first class park."

Morgan Territory School: 1870-1946

The Morgan Territory School opened in 1870 in one room on Morgan Territory Road with 32 students - its the largest ever enrollment.



The school closed its doors in 1947 and never reopened. It was too difficult to find a teacher to live so far out in the country, and to make matters worse, there were no rooms available to board a teacher.

After 1947, the students of Morgan Territory were forced to ride a bus to school in Concord. The Morgan Territory school building and land were given to the community for use as a hall but shortly thereafter it burned down.

According to Morgan Territory rancher Bill Morgan, who completed the eighth grade at the school in 1946, the school was located on the west side of Morgan Territory just before Curry Creek and adjacent to Dorothy Wright's property. A modern home with a vineyard now stands on the old school property.

Pictured here around 1899 are: Front row - Albert Morgan, an unidentified student, Lissy Morgan, Edith Olofson and Jerry Morgan. Second row - Bob Morgan, Sally Morgan, an unidentified student, Alice Morgan and Charlie Neary. Standing in back is Ellen Riley, the teacher.

Photo courtesy of the Clayton Historical Society

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