



# Culver City CERT Newsletter



Sept. 2006 phone: 253-5903 e-mail: CERT@culvercity.org web site: http://www.culvercitycert.org/

## National CERT Conference

By Marty Hente, KG6QFM,  
CERT Fleet Manager



On Tuesday, May 16, Steve Elstein, Stephanie Benjamin, Dr. Mike Landau and I, along with Capt. Darryl Wells from the Fire Department, attended a one-day National CERT Conference at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City. The morning included several breakout workshops on various aspects of CERT, presented by different groups from around the country. These workshops stressed the continuous need to be ready for any type of disaster. The two major points that I left with were that every CERT group needed to have a communications network in place since commercial communications will be either severely overloaded or non-existent, and that we as individuals in our organization must be prepared to be self-sufficient for a minimum of three to five days, or longer. The concept of self-sufficiency for 72 hours has been revised upward following the experiences of Hurricane Katrina last year. One thing our membership can do to help in the communications area is to get involved with the HAM radio program. The requirements for the Technician class operator have been revised this past July, and are now simpler than before.

[FYI: the next ham radio test is September 16<sup>th</sup>]

population well prepared and ready to move into action in the event of an emergency. Her speech, which was both informative as well as humorous, emphasized both CERT and the Citizen Corps, which is the mother organization for CERT. Additionally, Sheriff Lee Baca spoke and encouraged the assembly to continue the work of recruiting new members for CERT. He acknowledged the need for CERT as a vital organization to support the other emergency services of the government.

The afternoon sessions were "interest sessions" that involved two individuals who were part of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort, and their assessments of the situation. Both speakers presented slides showing their experiences in the disaster area. Once again, the message was clear that we need to have a viable communications network in place in order to maintain an efficient response to a disaster.

For me, a proud moment happened as we were waiting to enter the banquet hall for lunch. As we were standing in line, two members of a CERT group from New York were standing next to us and noticed that we were from Culver City. They told us that at a session they had attended, someone spoke about our citywide disaster drill last December. They both mentioned how impressed they were that we could accomplish an exercise of that magnitude and asked if we planned on repeating it again this year. It was an opportunity to share some of the aspects of our program and tell them a little about our city and its uniqueness. It also felt good to know that our local organization had received national recognition.

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The keynote speaker was Maria Shriver who spoke about the need to have a

## CERT Board Members and District Managers

<b>Perry Waldow</b> President, DAT Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Capt. Darryl Wells</b> CCFD/CERT Coord. 253-5903	<b>Bob Pine</b> CCARES Rep. 253-5903	<b>Steve Elstein</b> Fundraising 253-5903	<b>Michael Landau, M.D.</b> District 3 Manager 253-5903
<b>Stephanie Benjamin</b> Vice President 253-5903	<b>Earle Hartling</b> Training & Ed. Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Jose Saenz</b> Logistics Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Marty Zisner</b> District 1 Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Stephen Goldstein</b> Asst. District 3 Mgr. 253-5903
<b>Robin Turner</b> Treasurer 253-5903	<b>Susan Peterson</b> Secretary 253-5903	<b>Erik Mayer</b> Operations Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Tracy Sulkin</b> District 2 Mgr. 253-5903	<b>Marty Hente</b> Vehicle Manager 253-5903

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Those of us who attended received very nice emergency call-out bags, compliments of several businesses that sponsored the event. I would also like to express my appreciation to Captain Darryl Wells for his assistance in the registration process and for funding the costs out of his Department budget. I personally found the day to be helpful in my training to be better prepared to respond to a disaster, and I would encourage every member to take advantage of any kind of additional training they can receive. Our community is better able to handle an emergency as the result of our training through CERT, and that training benefits not only the community, but our own families as well.

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### It's 3 a.m. -- Do You Know Where Your REHAB Team Is?

By Stephanie Benjamin

Do you like 3 a.m. wake up calls and speeding down the road with lights and sirens blaring in the middle of the night? Well, it wasn't 3 a.m., we weren't allowed to speed or use the lights and sirens, and technically it was 7 p.m. when the REHAB Team got its second callout since the program began.

The program began two years ago, the brainchild of Erik Mayer, when we acquired one of the retired CCFD vehicles to bring aid, when called upon by the fire department, in the form of food, water, shelter, and whatever else may be requested to the scene of an emergency. Our purpose is simple and that is to give the firefighters a much-needed break to rehydrate and grab a snack so they can be at their best when they go back to aid in the emergency. "Rehab plays an important role in emergency operations. With minimal staffing and limited resources, our personnel frequently are called upon to go the extra mile. It is not uncommon for our firefighters to



L to R: REHAB members Erik Mayer, Marty Hente, Carol Newman, CCFD Engineer Bob Kelley and Firefighter Tim Sullivan

exhaust multiple air bottles before the rehab process ever occurs. It is imperative that we move the rehab process further up on the priority list. This will not only benefit the firefighters but the community that they serve too," said Asst. Chief Chris Sellers. And recently that's just what the REHAB Team had a chance to do.



In a cross-training exercise where the Fire Department was fighting a real fire in the Culver City drill tower, the REHAB Team was invited to train as well; bringing water and snacks to the firefighters fighting the fire. In fact, over the course of a week, three live burns were set, which meant three opportunities to train members of the REHAB Team.

Six members of our 40-member team experienced a "real" callout by responding to Station 1, loading up the REHAB unit with supplies, driving to the scene of the fire, setting up a shelter and rest area, and aiding the firefighters when they needed a cold bottle of water. It was a great opportunity to teach new members of the REHAB Team, and to learn how to be better responders.

The beauty and the challenge of the REHAB program is that you never know when you're going to get a call. It could be 1 a.m. or 6 p.m., Monday or Friday, or a weekend or Holiday. This is where you come in if you like surprises or you know that you wouldn't mind a 3 a.m. wake up call. Give us a call and join the REHAB Team. We love what we do and we are looking for others who would love to help the Fire Department too! You can contact Erik Mayer (Operations Manager / REHAB Manager) at [cccert@aol.com](mailto:cccert@aol.com) or Stephanie Benjamin (Vice President / Assistant REHAB Manager) at [stephaniecalaway@aol.com](mailto:stephaniecalaway@aol.com) for more information regarding the program and the requirements. We can always use an extra set of hands because we never know when we will be called.

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### Here's Your Chance!

So you've always wanted to do more for CERT but didn't know how? Guess what? Here's how! The 2007 CERT Board election is coming soon and you are welcome to run for any position. Simply contact one of the current Board members (see the bottom of page 1) and "put your name in the hat." If you'd like to know more about the different positions, any Board member will be happy to expound. The current secretary, Susan Peterson (that's me!), is stepping down so we'll need a new secretary. There can be "co-secretaries" if two Certizens want to share the gig. And, our Dist. 2 Manager, Tracy Sulkin, will be working in Mexico for a year, so we'll need someone to take her place too. *Here's your chance!*

## Have You Heard From CERT Lately?

Much of Culver City CERT's communications is now done through email. If you haven't received any email from us lately, there are two things you can check:



1. Did you change email and forget to tell us? If so, please send your new address to: CERT@culvercity.org or let us know through the "Contact" tab at www.culvercitycert.org

2. Are the CERT emails ending up in your Junk Email box? Take a look, and if so, mark at least one of those emails as "Not Junk." Better yet, add members@CulverCityCERT.org to your address book.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks,  
Bob Pine  
CERT@culvercity.org  
CERT Communications Manager

## Fire Service Day

By Stephanie Benjamin

It's not everyday day that the Culver City Fire Department opens its doors and lets the community into the daily life of its firefighters. OK, who am I kidding, of course they do. Whether it's a pre-school class on a field trip or a toddler walking by, the CCFD has always been gracious to let the community into its stations to see the shiny red fire apparatuses that line the engine bay floors—and Saturday, May 13, 2006, was one of those days.

As cars lined the streets and grills were set up, the CCFD opened its doors at Station 1 in downtown Culver City and welcomed in the community for its annual pancake

breakfast and coloring contest, while the annual car show lined Culver Blvd. CERT was also welcomed into the station that morning to hand out fliers on emergency preparedness, and to sign people up for future CERT courses.



It was a beautiful day with many new and old CERT members coming together to promote emergency preparedness. We started out with more than 150 CERT sign-up sheets in the morning and had less than thirty by the end of the day. And with each year that goes by, I see more creativeness with our CERT members and it is a privilege to see them use their training to excite others into taking the course.

If ever a word were to describe the festivities at this year's Fire Service Day, "enthusiasm" would be it. For those of you who missed it last year, the five-man bike was brought out again and with some of the newest members of the Fire Department on it, went up and down Culver Blvd. with their helmets on backwards. And I am happy to report the five firefighters who were on the bike are all safe and sound.



Josh, Robert, Juan, Mauricio, and Paul of the FD

I, too, had my own little adventure and I share this information because every now and then you have to laugh at yourself. By mid-afternoon, I was still waiting to get my picture taken with Sparky but there was still no one to dress up as Sparky. I was a bit upset at the prospect of not seeing him and mentioned it to a couple of firefighters. They, in turn, asked why I didn't dress up. It took me five seconds to decide. I'm just a big kid at heart and I would have liked to have seen him myself but knowing how much I wanted to see him didn't compare to the little kids who lit up when they saw Sparky and that, for me, made up for my not seeing him this year. Besides, we just got a new class of probationary firefighters so we can always make them dress up next time!



Sparky and the kids with Linda Radell watching

Thank you to all of the following CERT members who helped out at Fire Service Day 2006. *And they even volunteered in alphabetical order!*

Gilbert Barela	Dr. Mike Landau
Stephanie Benjamin	Leticia Mejia
Stephen Elstein	Carol Newman
Rebecca Fairbanks	Lehah Pealer
Joel Falter	Susan Peterson
Richard Geagan	Linda Radell
Susan Geagan	Peter Ruscetta
Melanie Halbach	Jose Saenz
Marty Hente	Holly Shaw
Sharon Hyland-Elstein	Ben Stapholtz
Kathleen Lally-Arena	Leyna Ling Wong

**CERT Annual Picnic**  
**Sat., Sept. 16th**

## It's Like Riding a Bicycle, Or Is It?

By Stephanie Benjamin

How important is training when it comes to being prepared for an emergency? That's a good question! According to Captain Tim Wilson, the training officer for the CCFD, when it comes to training the FD, "training is without a doubt, other than going on emergency calls, the most important thing we do." But what about CERT? We provide 22 hours of initial training to help people learn how to be better prepared for an emergency but how many of you remember "PASS" and "30, 2, and can do"? Speaking from personal experience, I just re-certified my EMT license, for which my initial training was more than eight years ago. I have to be honest, it's not everyday that I deliver a baby; in fact, I have never delivered a baby and it was a little nerve racking to have to do it for the first time in a very long time.

So with training for CERT on my mind, I sat down with Captain Wilson and we chatted about issues pertaining to training in hopes of relating them to CERT. According to Captain Wilson, the fire department abides by federal, state, and local guidelines and each entity requires a certain amount of training on an abundance of topics. "If you look at the responsibilities we have now... I remember when I got on the job back in 1979, the only things we had to worry about were what was in the forefront which was haz mat... now there's terrorism, wild land fires, WMD, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, and technical rescues. We have to have training in all of these different areas, along with general fire suppression and EMS type stuff, and the list of training areas that we are responsible for now is absolutely huge and it's going to continue that way."

It seems as though training isn't the problem; it's trying to find the time to do all of the training. And it's no wonder finding the time is difficult considering that mandates require more than 350 hours of training per year per firefighter, which roughly works out to training 3 hours per shift for each firefighter on duty.



Sky-high training at the Drill Yard

It's tough because there is no short-changing when it comes to training, as Captain Wilson states. "We have to train for the simple reason that we have to be ready for that next incident. Unless you go on a ton of calls everyday with a variety of different calls, you're going to get a little stale and you have to continue to work on that stuff to stay at the top of your game. Thank God we don't go on many terrorism calls, or WMDs, but if you don't go on them you lose your edge, so it's important that you train and that goes for everything."

This is where CERT comes in; we've just heard all this talk about guidelines and training 350 hours per year for the FD. Does CERT *have* to train too? Simply put, the answer is no. CERT is not the FD and we aren't required to train after our initial certification but *should* we continue to train? "Yes," says Captain Wilson, "It's absolutely of the utmost importance. I would say even more important if you're taking the position seriously. You're doing those activities even less often than us so there's a

significant importance to training for CERT." What does that mean for you? It means that, as we have always done, we would like to invite you out to the drill yard for the three CERT classes we teach each year, the drills we like to have at least bi-annually—if not more frequently, and to our general meetings.

Just a reminder, CERT is here for you! We want you to feel comfortable in the knowledge we have provided you with, and if you don't, or you just want to practice or watch a class to refresh your memory, then don't be afraid to come on down to the drill tower and take a refresher course or participate in our drills. I promise we won't bite; but if we do bite, would you know how to take care of the wound?

I can't tell you how many times I fell off my bike when I was trying to learn how to ride, but I can tell you it got easier and easier the more I practiced—that is, until I fell off and split open my chin. But as a CERT member, I know how to take care of wounds like that. We don't want you to feel obligated to give your life to CERT; however, we do want you to feel comfortable in taking care of your life in an emergency—after all, that's what CERT is about. As I mentioned earlier, I just re-certified my EMT license; and although going through the motions of delivering a child weren't in the forefront of my mind, just like riding a bike, it came back to me. Remember, as the fire department says, emergency preparedness begins with you.

*In case you've forgotten...*

**PASS:** pull, aim, squeeze, sweep (fire suppression)  
**30, 2, can do:** <30 respirations, <2 seconds, and "can do"—mental status (triage)  
**WMD:** weapons of mass destruction  
**EMS:** emergency medical services

## When Wilderness First Aid Becomes Urban First Aid

By Steve Goldstein



CERT teaches basic first aid in an urban environment, and this is done with the ex-

pectation of paramedics showing up in about five minutes to take over. We, as a group, set up a triage area (with immediate, delayed and morgue) and treat patients knowing that professional help is not far away. Just think if we had to deal with mass casualties for 3 - 5 days with our own equipment, food, shelter, and medical supplies.

After teaching Wilderness First Aid for some time now, I have come to realize that in a real urban emergency we may be faced with a three-day response time, similar to a wilderness emergency. As CERT-trained citizens, even with advanced or professional training, we must consider that we may not be able to rely on the City, County, State or even the Federal Government to bail us out in five minutes. Beyond helping patients, would we have enough food, shelter and medical supplies to last 3 - 5 days?

In Wilderness First Aid, we must take variables such as the weather, terrain, food supplies, medical supplies, clothing supplies, shelter materials, transportation materials, and available personnel into account when evaluating an incident. We must think long-range in our medical assessments, making plans to be able to run our medical area for a long period of time, if necessary, while waiting for emergency rescue.

In a real urban emergency, we may get materials to replace our stock, but a prolonged response time will dictate how we may best operate in the urban environment.

## Training Opportunities Through L.A. CERT

The next L.A. CERT refresher will be held on Sunday, October 22, 2006 from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm (Registration starts at 7:00 am) at Fire Stn. 88 (5101 N. Sepulveda, Sherman Oaks). The drill is open to all graduates of training programs based on Los Angeles City and/or FEMA CERT courses. Sign up online at <http://www.certla.com/biannual.htm>

The next round of Quarterly Division Trainings will be "Electrical Safety" by the DWP.

Tuesday, September 12  
7:00 pm -9:00 pm  
Division 1  
Frank Hotchkin Memorial  
Training Center

Tuesday, September 19  
7:00 pm -9:00 pm  
Division 3  
Fire Station 89

Sign up at <http://www.cert-la.com/quarterly-trainings.htm>

## Memorial Day Remembrance Event

Hello fellow CERTizens:

This is District 3 Manager giving a report on one of CC CERT's annual events. We are asked to provide First Aid services to those who place flags at the L.A. National Cemetery.



Members of the Boy and Girl Scouts, ROTC, and their families come to the hallowed place every Memorial Day weekend to honor our American veterans who "gave their last full measure of devotion" on behalf of the rest of us. As I have mentioned in past newsletters, every one of us

should participate in this event as a small token of appreciation of the sacrifices given so we can enjoy our freedom.

I shared the morning of Saturday, May 27th with Kathleen Lally-Arena, Stephanie Benjamin and Carol Newman. Our shiny CERTmobile made the trip without incident. No backfiring noted!



We were pleased to take care of 9 victims, a few less than last year. The cases

included a teen with a foreign body in the eye that was flushed out, a hypertensive adult needing a blood pressure check, a weak and dizzy female who fell and suffered an abrasion so was given sugar/water and a bandage, a young boy with a thorn in his finger that was cleansed and dressed, a female who fell and received an ice pack and another who had a minor scratch that was given a bandage, a male with a left elbow abrasion treated with a bandage, a boy who had a minor finger crush due to horseplay that was covered by a bandage. The final patient had a splinter (*oh, let's just call it an impalement!*) that was cleansed and dressed.

No serious cases but a nice variety. All were happy that we were there. Plenty of "thank yous" that made us feel satisfied.

Hope your summer is going well. Although I didn't make it to this year's Fiesta La Ballona, I hope most of you did make it. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our annual picnic. If any District 3 CERTizens have any questions, please contact me at 310-253-5903 or [CERT@culvercity.org](mailto:CERT@culvercity.org)

Michael D. Landau, M.D.  
Dist. 3 Manager  
CCARES Vice Director

# CERTips



## Etiquette Edition

By Earle Hartling, Training Manager

Okay, I know what you're thinking, "an etiquette lesson from this guy?" All right, I'll admit I'm no Miss Manners, but I have been around this CERT thing long enough to have seen the potential for relationship problems between CERT members when participating in emergency response activities. I've seen conflicts happen during drills when we're just practicing; if such incidents occur during the real thing, we could be in for a lot of trouble. The following are just a few of the, let's say "behavioral missteps", that I've noticed along with the problems they could cause.

### **Who's the Boss?**

If you remember back to the Incident Command System part of the CERT training class (you do remember, don't you?), you'll recall that every functional group of an emergency response effort has a leader. For example, from the Incident Commander we go down to the Operations Branch Director, then to the Search and Rescue Group Manager and finally to leader of Search Team No. 1. Each team, or group, or branch has just ONE boss who directs the efforts of his or her teammates in their area of responsibility. It's not a democracy, it's not a debate society; like it or not, it's command and control. Otherwise, we have chaos.

Consider this scenario: Our Search Team No. 1 lead has been directed by the S&R Group Manager to search the top two floors of a building. Along the way, some injured victims are found. One team member insists that they abandon the building search and carry the victims out of the building, an argument ensues and nothing is accomplished. The team member that insisted on varying from their assigned task was **WRONG!** Even if that team had extracted the victims it had found, they would have failed in their mission. Why? Because now no one is searching the rest of the building and other victims that may be in there won't be found. Every job is important and must be completed for the entire response "plan" to work. We've seen this during our final drills, and we've wound up with teams getting lost, victims left in the building, multiple teams trying to do the same job, etc. What the team leader says, goes.

This doesn't mean that team members can't provide input to the team leader. After all, two heads (or

three or four) are better than one. Team leaders should respect this input and take it into consideration. For example, when a team member says, "I'm wiped out, I need to sit down for a minute and have a drink of water," or "the ceiling in that room looks like it's ready to collapse," the team leader should not try to force the team to go ahead with its assigned task immediately, but inform his or her supervisor of the team's change in status so that the response plan can be adjusted accordingly.

### **NO YELLING!!!**

Did I sound like your mother? Yelling at a teammate to be heard over ambient noise or to warn them of danger is one thing, but to yell at them just because you're ticked off is quite another. This kind of disrespectful exchange is counterproductive, and can affect the psychological well-being of the victims we're trying to help. I'm sure I wouldn't feel too great about my chances of being rescued if the rescuers are screaming at each other and calling each other names. Excuse me, a little help here!

As bad as this type of behavior is during the stress of a real emergency, it is **REALLY** unacceptable when it occurs during a drill, when there shouldn't be that kind of pressure. In this case, we're not worried about what the victims are thinking about us, but what our neighbors and fellow Culver City citizens are thinking when they see us out in public acting like this. We want to earn the respect and trust of the general public because of our professionalism and competency, and we'd like to recruit new members to the organization because of our performance. Angrily shouting at other CERT members in the middle of the street does serious damage to our reputation and credibility with the community.

### **Why Charlton Heston Isn't in CERT**

Because CERT is an unarmed volunteer group, that's why. The sole purpose of CERT is to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people, while maintaining the safety of the rescuers. And for this reason, the carrying of weapons (knives, handguns, spears, bazookas, etc.) is **NEVER PERMITTED** during a meeting, drill, picnic, class or any CERT function, even a real-life emergency. And I know what you're asking and, yes, a Swiss Army knife is an appropriate tool in your call-out bag. But you already knew that, didn't you?

CERT's mission does not include crowd control, security, protection of property, law enforcement or anything else that might require the use of a weapon. During a CERT disaster activation, we will rely on the CCPD and not untrained civilians with guns for  
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