

# CERT NEWS

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Fall 2020

## 2020-21 CERT VIRTUAL ACTIVITY CALENDAR

*We sometimes learn about new training opportunities or other events that cause us to change our CERT calendar. We do send out notices about cancellations or date changes. Please check your email and Better Impact regularly!*

### FLOOD WATCH TRAINING

Thurs, Nov 19, 7-9pm. Check Better Impact. (Virtual Zoom.)

### CERT TRAFFIC CONTROL

for drive-through flu clinic, Fri, Nov 20, 8:30-11:00am, Susi Q.

### CERT BOARD MEETING

Wed, Dec 9, 5-6:00pm. Invitation to join the board to share your thoughts. Let Sonny Myers know if you'd like him to send you a zoom link. (Virtual Zoom.)

### WE'RE COPIN' WITH COVID

#### VIRTUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Wed, Dec 9, 6-7:30pm. Check Better Impact, watch for zoom link in your email.

### RADIO VIRTUAL ZOOM CLASS

6-8:00pm, Tues, Jan 28, 2021. Basic FRS and GMRS radio usage. Details in Better Impact.

### CERT RADIO TEAM CHECKS

Sun 4pm; Wed 8:30pm.

### VIRTUAL CERT TRAINING

approved for 2021! Stay tuned for dates!

## CERT Board

### CONTACT US:

[LagunaCERT@gmail.com](mailto:LagunaCERT@gmail.com)

Sonny Myers, Director  
Chris Weidhaas, Deputy Director  
Shannon Martinez, Social Media  
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## A Note from Your EOC on Recent Events and City Updates

**A**s we watched the terrifying Silverado and Blue Ridge fires a few weeks back, on the doorstep of the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our '93 fire, I think we were all thrust into a heightened sense of vulnerability. It takes a disaster sometimes to get people thinking of preparedness. The number of AlertOC and Nixle signups was indicative that there's still a lot of people we need to reach with our preparedness messaging.

The recent test of the Outdoor Warning System was a success, as we were able to activate the 13 speakers currently installed. We deployed staff to the vicinity, and identified how far the alert tone and message carried. A few highlights and surprises were that the speaker at Thurston Middle School could be heard up on Alta Laguna Blvd, parts of Summit Way could hear the alert from Fire Station 2, and parts of Morningside Dr. heard the message from Fire Station 3. This system is going to help ensure we have redundant systems to notify the city of impending emergencies.

We're excited that city staff is working with the CERT board to identify means to host a virtual new member training. The modules can be facilitated virtually, with the in-person skills components being done in a safe physically distant manner. We are excited to bring on new volunteers and believe this will help to offset some of the recent turnover.

I wanted to add a note about personal preparedness from my own recent experience. I have a daughter who's turning 6 next month. We were commenting about how quickly she's growing out of her clothes and shoes, which reminded me to update our evacuation bags more frequently than normal. The clothes I put in for her back in April do not fit anymore. Just a reminder that evacuation kits aren't static, they include things with shelf lives much shorter than your canned beans and need to be updated accordingly.

Lastly, unfortunately, even with the recent vaccine news, we are still a long way from being rid of COVID and on the pathway to normalcy. The upcoming holiday season is going to be particularly hard, as we have to forgo or cancel long-held family, friend, and neighborhood traditions. We have to remember the risk of COVID, with the added concern of flu, and ensure that we're staying safe and keeping our families and loved ones safe.

Stay prepared,

Brendan Manning  
Emergency Operations Coordinator



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENDAN MANNING

## CERT Volunteers Warn of Extreme Heat at Fire Watch

By Sonny Myers

**S**eptember was hot! The Laguna Beach Police and Fire Departments asked CERT volunteers to staff an information booth at the Alta Laguna Park trailhead entrance September 5, 6, 29 & September 30. Volunteers **Karen Arellano, Rex Theobald, Gillian Sullivan, Janice Hayden, Sandi Cain** and I provided park information over four days to visitors and locals and kept a lookout



*Gillian Sullivan and Rex Theobald brave the heat to caution park-goers and hikers about severe weather/fire threats at Alta Laguna Park.*

for fire. We reminded those entering the park on the dangers of extreme heat and the importance to carry water and be cautious in the park. Officer Zac Martinez and EOC Brendan Manning stopped by to check on the trailhead entrance. There was one call to the Fire Department for medical aid for a hiker due to heat exhaustion. The unidentified hiker declined aid from the Fire Department upon their arrival. All four days proved to be very hot in Laguna Beach. Temperatures at the entrance to the park reached 95° on the 6th and 101° at noon on September 30.



*Red Flag Fire Watch Heats Up! Top: Karen Arellano (left) and Sandi Cain (right) endured high September temperatures and advised visitors about how to stay safe and keep an eye out for any signs of fire while visiting hiking trails in Sept. Center: Janice Hayden also endured the unseasonable weather to help keep visitors safe; Bottom: the temperature from Sonny's dashboard when he left Alta Laguna park that day.*

PHOTOS BY SONNY MYERS

# CERT Works with Seniors to Distribute Earthquake Kits

By Sonny Myers, Director

**L**aguna Beach CERT along with Laguna Beach Seniors have distributed and installed 20 Home Fastening Earthquake Starter Kits to senior residents of Laguna Beach. We appreciate the generosity of the Earthquake Country Alliance for providing these very useful kits so that our Laguna Beach seniors can become more prepared BEFORE an earthquake occurs.

*“Thank you to the California Earthquake Country Alliance for making the earthquake safety kit grant available for our community. Our seniors’ homes are safer and they are more prepared now due to the earthquake safety kits.”*

—John Fay, MSG, Director,  
Aging in Place Services, Laguna Beach Seniors, Inc.

The fulfillment of the ECA grant proved to be quite challenging during the pandemic due to social distancing protocols set forth by the state. Laguna Beach CERT and Lifelong Laguna volunteers, neighbors and family members came together and, in some cases, installed or gave guidance to the installation of multiple kits to limit exposure to our seniors by non-family members. I would like to thank CERT volunteers **Shannon Martinez, Jenn Sarnsen, Sandi Cain, Diana Aston, Lisa Broughton** and **Carol Kelly** for stepping up and providing the distribution and installation of 13 kits. I also extend our thanks to John Fay and seven volunteers from Lifelong Laguna/Laguna Beach Seniors for the installation of the remaining seven Home Earthquake Fastening Kits. Congratulations! This was a great team effort! This has been a rewarding experience working with our Senior Center and Laguna Beach CERT volunteers who showed their care and willingness to assist our Seniors with earthquake preparedness.



Earthquake starter kits were given away to Laguna Beach seniors through a California Earthquake Alliance grant. Above right: Shannon Martinez and Sonny Myers distribute kits; below them are Jennifer Sarnsen and Charlie Czernecki showing off the kits. Left: Jennifer Sarnsen with her mother, Marlies Sarnsen; on right is a senior installing a TV strap. Bottom left at kit handout, are Lifelong Laguna Volunteers, Hymie Pikoos and Laura Widdows, John Fay, Shannon, Martinez.

PHOTOS BY SONNY MYERS

## Sales of Emergency Backpacks Remain Steady

By Sonny Myers

To date, we have sold more than 1000 backpacks! We always see a spike in sales whenever there is an emergency, Red Flag announcement or earthquake. You



PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY SONNY MYERS

*CERT delivers to your door!*

could almost graph the increase in sales by current events. Over the summer CERT volunteers **Janice Hayden, Wendy Caufield** and **Jennifer Sarnsen** made emergency backpack deliveries sold through the Laguna Beach Recreation Department website. Reminder, CERT only delivers to those that live in the 92651 zip-code area.

Sales have slowed somewhat but I am confident they will pick up as winter and the holiday season approaches. What better way to say you care by giving the gift of preparedness? Tell a friend, neighbor or relative to get prepared. Remember, the time to prepare for an emergency is BEFORE an emergency!

To purchase emergency backpacks, [click here](#) to go to the City website.

## CERT Radio Team Practiced for a Great California ShakeOut

By Sonny Myers

October 15, 2020 was a beautiful day for emergency radio communication preparedness in Laguna Beach. CERT radio team volunteer participating in this year's Great California ShakeOut were **Janice Hayden, Matt Lawson, Terry Trombatore, Rex Theobald** and me, **Sonny Myers**.

At precisely 10:15 am, we practiced passing a test message via handheld radio from the Diamond/Crestview area to North Laguna. While on the surface this may not seem important to many, should an emergency such as an earthquake or other large-scale disaster strike Laguna Beach it is reassuring to know that our volunteers can relay critical information amongst ourselves and to first responders if necessary. Thank you to the radio team for taking the time to be prepared.



*Equipment readied to test at ShakeOut drill.*

## Red Flag Patrol One of Several Classes Held Via Zoom This Year

By Sonny Myers and Sandi Cain

At the start of this year, few of us had ever heard of Zoom as an entity as opposed to a verb or adverb. Today, it is a standard online 'quick meeting' format used by everyone from kids to executives. When it became a way to have a quick meeting where attendees could see each other, it grew exponentially and was widely regarded as an easy way to have a brief not-in-person (it's Covid time you know) meeting. People laughed when they said they'd been 'zooming'. They attended just to see what other attendees looked like. It was trendy and fun.

But in the days of Covid19, novelty wears off quickly. Now, Zoom is a noun instead of an action. And its popularity is still growing as it serves well for a quick a meeting during which attendees still can see each other, That can be a good thing—

as long as everyone remembers to be dressed before joining!

Laguna Beach CERT has embraced the Zoom format for quick board meetings, open-ended discussions and online training and refresher classes that all volunteers are welcome to attend (though it's unlikely that all 250+ volunteers could be accommodated on one screen)! The format has made it easier to carry out plans, hold discussions of possible events and an easy way to meet our newer volunteers. It's also the modern means of online training!

When the National Weather Service announces a Red Flag warning CERT may be called upon to monitor the hillsides and park entrances within the City limits of Laguna Beach. This year, it was a good thing we had many Red Flag-trained volunteers,

*Red Flag continues on page 5*

## CERT Survey Under Way

**W**e are canvassing CERT volunteers to gauge your ongoing level of interest in the program. The pandemic has squashed in-person training sessions and other typical activities, so you haven't heard from us much, but we are looking ahead to better times when we can be more active again. We have five questions for you that will take about 5 minutes. Does that work for you?

If you still live in Laguna Beach, are you still interested in CERT activities or were you simply interested in the training?

There often are updates to the training you already completed in the initial CERT program. Are you interested in refresher classes? If so, do you prefer in-person (once allowed) or remote/Zoom style training?

Would you like to remain on the call list for short-term call-outs such as delivering flyers to businesses about potential flooding, or helping with Red Flag fire watch at Alta Laguna Park, or delivering city-purchased backpacks?

Are you interested in social events such as the Christmas dinner or summer picnic (once group activities are allowed again)?

Is there anything else you'd like to see added to our program such as 'happy hours' via Zoom or getting updated information about disaster readiness, etc.?

*See related story page 6.*

## Red Flag

*continued from page 4*

considering the number of high fire danger days we've had. We've already been on several informational call-outs to alert the public to fire danger from the Alta Laguna Park trailhead, and another may be imminent as the Santa Ana winds are kicking up as of this writing. And some of those who took the Red Flag class via Zoom earlier this year have been among our volunteers!

So if you're one to roll your eyes at 'refresher' classes, why not sign up instead? There's always something new to learn or revised procedures to be explained. Besides, you may be able to Zoom the meeting in your jammies from your home laptop screen!

## Neighborhood Plans an Integral Part of Readiness

*By Sandi Cain, Editor*

**T**he citywide test of the emergency notification system on Oct. 20 was a good



*Pictured: some basic items found in CERT bags such as helmets, rope and batteries are a good starting point for building an emergency kit. Take stock of what plans and supplies are in place for your neighborhood. It's a good idea to check on those who might need help in a disaster, too.*

reminder that each segment of Laguna Beach has its own needs and challenges should the time come when that 'test' is for real.

The test went off without a hitch. But it should also have been a good reminder that our city consists of 27 'zones' for such alerts and that we need to be mindful of what residents can do on their own until help arrives when the message is prefaced by "This is NOT a test."

Our CERT volunteers are spread

throughout the city, so this might be a good time for all of us to take stock of what plans are in place within our own neighborhood, if any, and what other efforts might be added in the future.

If you get that far, drop us a line at [lagunacert@gmail.com](mailto:lagunacert@gmail.com) to let us know what you have in the works to better prepare your neighborhood for emergencies. With your permission, we will publish

those ideas in the winter 2021 issue in an effort to encourage other neighborhoods to take their own measure of readiness.



*Susan Reese, left, and Pilar Hemry met up in Prescott, Arizona in October. Pilar is still a CERT volunteer even though she is usually in AZ. Laguna CERT misses her.*

PHOTO BY PILAR HEMRY

## What's Happening with Laguna Beach Seniors? Updating the CERT Roster

By Nadia Babayi, Laguna Beach Seniors Executive Director

In recent months, Laguna Beach Seniors made more than 1,185 phone calls to check on seniors' well-being. We delivered groceries more than 235 times and distributed 300 face coverings.

We publicized our Feeling the Blues and Care Management programs in local news media, noting that consultations were free and could be done by phone. Twice monthly, we published morale-building Spotlight on Seniors columns in *Stu News Laguna*, highlighting seniors who exemplify the resilience of their generation.

Lifelong Laguna's Aging-in-Place project – with 111 members and 51 volunteers currently enrolled – was also a focus in our marketing materials. Home Modification Assessments were completed virtually. We collaborated with the City and Habitat for Humanity to create the LBS HOME home-repair project to assist qualified older adults improve their living conditions by making home repairs that are focused on health, safety, and accessibility.

And recently we launched The iPad Project, handing out iPads to 14 vulnerable seniors who would otherwise not have been able to connect with our support programs or see their distant family and friends, albeit virtually. For those who did not have WIFI at their home, our organization assumed the cost of the internet connection. We look forward to expanding this project.

Lifelong Laguna partnered with Laguna Beach CERT to deliver and install twenty (20) Earthquake Safety Kits in the homes of older adults to make their homes safer.

We now offer 46 programs and services online, most via the Zoom video conferencing and Live Feed platforms. These offerings run the gamut from health and wellness offerings, educational classes, entertaining presentations, to fun

discussions that quickly became popular and attracted seniors with a variety of tastes and interests. Please visit our website at [www.TheSusiQ.org](http://www.TheSusiQ.org) regularly for updated program information.

Within the past seven months and since the beginning of the pandemic, more than 6,000 people (seniors of all ages) have attended our online programs and services.

### **Here is a list of some of our current most popular online programs:**

- Classical Composers & Vocalists
- Music Appreciation
- Standing Yoga “Exercise A La Susi Q”
- Ukulele
- Mindful Meditation
- Yoga Nidra: Graceful Transitions
- 10 active clubs including TedTalk, Science Discussions, Current Events, Writer's Workshop, Contemporary Short Story, and Book Club

### **Additionally, the following support groups are active and ongoing:**

- Alzheimer's Caregiver support group
- Chronic Illness support group
- Heart to Heart support group
- Men's Support Group and Men's Group “Social”
- Women Supporting Women support group
- Death Café – embracing life while discussing the end of life issues

### **Free Assistance Programs by appointment include:**

- Care Management (Social Services)
- Aging in Place (Lifelong Laguna)
- Feeling the Blues – individualized therapy sessions
- Hearing Screenings
- Health Insurance Counseling – HICAP
- Legal Clinic – Q&A with Seaside Legal; Attorney Jane Fulton

By Sandi Cain

**A**fter nine years into our existence, we are combing our roster of 250+ trained volunteers to ascertain how many still work or live in Laguna Beach and how many want to continue their participation in the program.

So, when a CERT volunteer calls, please give that volunteer five minutes or so of your time to answer five questions about your involvement in the program. There are no ‘right or wrong’ answers—just honest ones. If your life has gone in a different direction, that's fine and we will know not to contact you for meetings, training or callouts. If you are still interested in volunteering for CERT activities (in Zoom meetings, happy hours or online training right now), just let us know and we will keep you in the loop.

If you have a bright idea to add to our roster of activities (even if online isn't so ‘active’ during Covid), please let us know as we are always open to new and creative ideas?

You can do that by emailing [lagunacert@gmail.com](mailto:lagunacert@gmail.com). And if you have moved or your life has gone in a different direction, please let us know. At the very least, you still will have learned valuable skills that can help you in other aspects of your lives! Lastly, please update your personal profile in Better Impact. Having correct profile information for our volunteers has a direct effect on emergency preparedness for the residents and visitors in Laguna Beach and surrounding areas.

You might be hearing from our volunteer team **Pat Gorman, Sandi Cain, Jo Jensen, or Karen Arellano** who are doing the survey to update our roster. Thank you Pat, Sandi, Jo, and Karen, for making the calls... and thank you CERT volunteers for taking a few minutes to bring us up to date!

*See related story page 5.*

## OC Fires: A Teachable Moment?

By Sandi Cain, Newsletter Editor

**I**t's a bit ironic that the massive fires in inland OC began on October 27—the same date as the 1993 fire in Laguna Beach that consumed 16,000 acres, 400+ homes and is still ranked among one of the 20 largest fire losses in the U.S. It also inspired the city and other groups to work toward ensuring our residents would always have the information they need to make decisions in an emergency.

Hopefully, for those of you who were here in 1993, you learned some lessons and kept an eye on activity this time so that you were ready to go if need be. We'd like to hear from you about your experiences during the recent Silverado and Blue Ridge fire incidents. If your CERT training kicked in to help you deal with this situation, please let us know how!

Have local incidents like that fire, or floods or other incidents encouraged you to prepare for the worst? If so, what have you done? In 1993, were you home when the fire began to spread? Were you able to get home? If not, how have you planned to get help for family and/or pets in the future?

Depending on your skills beyond CERT, were you called out to assist with any aspect of evacuation, shelters, or other aspects of that emergency?

Did you have a go-bag or two ready? If not, did you put one together quickly? Did you have a list of 'things to take'? If not, do you have one now?

Were you able to get adequate information from websites/media to



*The services of helicopters able to drop water on fires are often employed in this area—most recently during the recent Silverado and Blue Ridge fires.*

make educated decisions about what to do?

Do you think you were adequately prepared for this situation? If not, what would you do to be more prepared next time?

Please send us a paragraph of your experience with this most recent fire challenge and we will run as many as we can in the soon-to-be-published newsletter! Submit your experience to

lagunacert@gmail.com and be sure to provide your contact information.

More about this year's Silverado fire can be found at: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/10/26/silverado-fire/>

Information about this year's Blue Ridge Fire can be found here: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/10/26/blue-ridge-fire/>; <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents>

### **CERT — doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people.**

*Has your cell phone number, cell provider or email address changed?*

*We need to have accurate information in Better Impact in order to contact you in a disaster.*

*Please go to Better Impact to update your profile.*

**Log into your Better Impact account:**

<https://app.betterimpact.com/login/volunteer>

Username: your email ~ Password: cert92651 (unless changed)

**And, please put your photo in Better Impact. We can help you take one that you like!**