

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH CERT NEWSLETTER

SINCE 1991

January 2013



President's Message

By Peter Petrelis

I wish you all a Happy, Healthy New Year and hope you had a great holiday season. CERT capped the year with a wonderful pot-luck holiday party the evening of December 8 at the Rodgers Seniors' Center. Sixty-five members and friends attended. The food was excellent—CERT members do know how to cook! The dinner was followed by a gift exchange.

Thank you to Esther Whitton, December Holiday Party Committee Chairperson. A special thank you to my fellow party committee members: Judy Ann Morris, Carol Burtis, Anna Pinter and Virginia Petrelis. We are grateful to Judy Ann for arranging the use of the senior center. Esther handmade the beautiful center pieces and door prizes.

All CERT members were invited by email. If you didn't receive an invitation, we don't have your current email address in the database. Email me at pgpworks@verizon.net to update your information.

Since our last newsletter, CERT members led by First Vice-President Richard Batistelli provided traffic control for the November 3 Huntington Hospital drive-through flu shot clinic. Thank you to all who supported this effort.

Chris Merkle, 2011 CERT graduate, has shared with us on pages 2-5 his first-hand experience working on site cleanup after Super Storm Sandy. Chris was a member of Team Rubicon, a veterans' organization that unites the skills and experience of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams. There are many lessons we can learn from his experience. The new year is a good time to review and update your own emergency preparedness plan and replace expired emergency supplies. Remember to check the operation of your flashlights and emergency radios and other electronic devices.

CERT members are invited to the monthly management and general member meetings. **All CERT members are invited to attend and participate in the "State of CERT" general meeting on Thursday, February 7, 2013 at 6:30**

pm in the Huntington Beach City Council Chambers. Topics will include CERT plans and classes for 2013 and induction of "Fire Department Volunteer" graduates of 2011 and 2012. On the same night, we will be recognizing and awarding our outstanding CERT volunteers.

The CERT Executive Board met with Brevyn Mettler, Emergency Services Coordinator, on January 10 to firm up CERT plans and activities for 2013. The former "Save-A-Life Saturday" four classes will now be scheduled over four weekday evenings 6:30 to 9:30 pm (April 10, 17, 24, and May 1) plus one Saturday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm May 4. Sign up for classes at the CERT website, www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/cert

Upon completion of these classes, you will receive a completion certificate signed by the mayor and you'll be better prepared to help your family and neighborhood in the event of a disaster. With completion of more training, you can become a CERT Fire Department Volunteer and participate in city-wide CERT activities outside your neighborhood. Once you become a Fire Department Volunteer, by taking Red Cross Shelter training, you can become a County Mutual Aid Program (CMAP) Volunteer.

The elected 2013 CERT officers are President Peter Petrelis, First Vice President Richard Batistelli, Second Vice President Mike Depin, DSW Manager Michael Reyes, Secretary Virginia Petrelis, and Treasurer Esther Whitton.

MEETING NOTICE

Beginning March 14, management and general membership meetings will be held on the SECOND Thursday of the month in B7 / B8. (We will no longer meet in the EOC on the first Thursday.)

Management meetings will be from 6:00 to 6:30pm (all are welcome.) From 6:30 to 8:30 pm, a general meeting will be held with either guest speakers or table-top special training exercises for CERT members.



HB CERT

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CLASS 1

SUPERSTORM SANDY

By Chris Merkle

Volunteerism: If you are reading this you have already made the commitment to help others in our community, most of whom you do not even know, with no expectation of something in return—thank you.

My name is Chris and I am a new volunteer with CERT. I haven't had the privilege of meeting most of you yet and fortunately our skills have not been needed (yet), so when Super Storm Sandy hit the East Coast and I had the opportunity to help, I did. Upon my return, Peter, CERT President, asked if I could relate my experiences, so please excuse me as I borrow the soap box. I was given this great opportunity to help through Team Rubicon which promotes "A new paradigm in disaster response that recognizes and harnesses the skills of military veterans; offering them a chance to continue their service by helping and empowering those afflicted by disasters, and also themselves"... It is helping me.



Just getting to the area presented a challenge as would responding to any disaster. The sheer devastation along the coast further dampened the response. Team Rubicon referred simply as TR, from here forward, began activating their East Coast volunteers prior to the storm's arrival and a regional effort was launched to assist. However, as the scope of the damage and the sheer magnitude of the amount of elbow grease required to clean up Sandy was

realized, further assets were activated, all of TR Nation. This only came after a sustainable infrastructure was put in place and was all accomplished through monetary donations as well as many sponsors some of which are Jet Blue for donating flights for volunteers to get to the fight. Brooklyn Boulders provided us with a huge warehouse to run operations out of and billet all of us. Also, Home Depot supplied an astonishing amount of tools, supplies and manpower.



Do we have enough equipment to assist if Huntington Beach or now Sunset Beach were flooded ?

By the time I arrived, all the rescue operations had been completed and the area had moved into the recovery phase. TR has only been active since January 2010, however this was their 35th mission and largest to date. The legacy agencies still had to find a niche for them to fill and, after proving themselves, they were assigned Suffolk County. With any water related natural crisis, the long lasting effects of flooding prove to be the most problematic and our goal was to assist as many victims as possible through remediation of their houses (removing all affected household goods, drywall, and everything to the foundations) to stem the tide of mold and losing their house entirely.

SUPERSTORM SANDY (Cont)

By Chris Merkle



The remains of a house and the ceiling of a house four blocks from the beach one week after Sandy, with mold already working into the very framework of the house.

Through day in, day out, removal of wet household goods, drywall and vehicles, I found some things worked and others did not. Lessons were learned that are applicable to our Huntington Beach community,

N95 Dust Filters: Working hard the first day I struggled to breathe through a soggy wet, and dirty mask. Luckily someone smarter (not hard to do) pointed out to change my mask often. I averaged four masks a day, my bug-out (aka Grab-n-Go Bag) back here in HB only has one mask for each family member, oops! Also, the mask which features the 3M™ Cool Flow™ Exhalation Valve worked a lot more efficiently and also fit. After checking, most of my teammates had failed to pinch the metal nose tab around their nose and the mask was not sealed. My large face caused my standard sized mask to pinch my nose. This made me adjust my mask with dirty gloves which in turn clogged the fibers making it harder to breathe. Fit testing before beginning work is necessary. .

Goggles: We had a ton of debris floating around from the sheetrock removal and constant debris projected into our eyes while working overhead. So yes, goggles are required but most fogged up so bad they caused more of a hazard. We found scuba divers' spray or rub worked very well.



Former President Bill Clinton in our mobile command bus accessing the damage and our volunteer team tracking system provided by Plantir via GPS - GIS (The Clinton Global Initiative, raised 1,000 volunteers for a day of action!)



Be prepared, as an experienced CERT member, to possibly lead teams of spontaneous volunteers.

Lighting: We take the ability to see and power for lights for granted, until we lose it. Head lamps are vital for work in a disaster area, from tripping hazards, face-level pipes, exposed wires and overhead threats. Nothing is the same in the structure after the natural, or even worse, man-made disaster. Once occupying a space to work or search, a bright hand-portable free-standing area light is essential to conduct work safely.

SUPERSTORM SANDY (Cont)

By Chris Merkle



High water mark visible on the wall, this home is five blocks from the beach. The resident was still sleeping on a wet mattress and inhaling black mold daily.

Gloves: As we have been told a hundred times in training, gloves will save your hands. Also, wear vinyl or latex exam gloves underneath to prevent stagnate water from soaking into your hands. We had to constantly wash our hands to avoid contaminating our food and ourselves, to prevent our becoming a problem.

Helmets: I started with the standard construction helmet, but with all the movement and lots of bending over, I consistently had to adjust or retrieve my dropped helmet. I switched to a chin strapped secured climbing / rescue style helmet which also fit closer to my head and reduced my overall height in low overhang areas. If you wear a construction helmet, get a strap to hold the helmet in place.



A majority of this is common sense to most of you who have been training for awhile. I had the luxury of adjusting my gear to my needs since I was working out of a base camp. If you are called out in a disaster you may only have what you brought and that is it. So make wise choices in protective, layered, bright clothing, marked with your name and bring your ID's. I also humbly recommend a backpack containing necessary supplies.... be self sufficient and not the problem.



Main St. Rockaway Beach, Queens. Over a month since Sandy and still sand on the roads, traffic cops on every corner, and generator powered lights.



Cars flooded with salt water have all been disabled.

Some final thoughts for our homes: It has been over a month now and many residents still have no power back there. Imagine that, here in the USA and **no power** for a month! Generators use up to five gallons a day of fuel. That's a lot of noise and standing in gas lines. We were supplied by Goal Zero which provided solar power/ac/dc chargeable (before the disaster) yeti coolers and generators with lights, all hand portable.

Water: Fresh water was not available for about a week, but now bottled water is readily available.

SUPERSTORM SANDY (Cont)

By Chris Merkle



The role of big traditional relief agencies... I personally saw only one truck with two aide workers from one group and two personnel registering victims for claims one day from another agency.

Overall, it was great to get back there and help our fellow citizens, and utilize the skills I learned in CERT to help people. It was physically tiring and I didn't think it would effect me after all I have experienced as a post 9/11 veteran. However, seeing so many families in such pain, and standing in destroyed home after destroyed home, carrying out their personal belongings, wears on one's core. So prepare your self accordingly both in mind and spirit for the battle we may all face in our backyard someday.



Flu Alert

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is warning that the flu is spreading faster and earlier than usual this season. There is widespread flu activity in 43 states but, so far, California has been spared an outbreak. However, doctors say it's only a matter of time before the flu is widespread in the state. They expect this year's strain to hit patients hard.

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months of age or older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses,

the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. Information about which viruses this season's vaccine will protect against is available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/vaccine-selection.htm

Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is also important, as well as not sharing food and drinks. The incubation period is about a day or so before symptoms start until about five to seven days afterwards so you could be transmitting the flu before you even know you're sick.

It's not too late for families to get vaccinated and many places have plenty of flu shots to go around. Contact your doctor. You can also search for a nearby location offering flu shots at: www.flushothealthmap.org.

PHOTOS FROM THE December 8, 2012 Holiday Party



The CERT family was happy to see Gerard Charles return after his long illness.



PHOTOS FROM THE December 8, 2012 Holiday Party



PHOTOS FROM THE December 8, 2012 Holiday Party (cont)



Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is to provide information and training on disaster preparedness; provide leadership and coordination during an emergency, and assistance to help victims recover from an emergency.

CPR Classes

Fire Med customers can take CPR classes for free and non-FireMed customers can take classes for a fee. Dates are listed below:

- Saturday, January 12th - 10 AM to 1 PM
- Wednesday, January 23rd - 6 PM to 9 PM
- Saturday, February 9th - 10 AM to 1 PM
- Wednesday, February 27th - 6 PM to 9 PM
- Saturday, March 16th - 10 AM to 1 PM
- Wednesday, March 27th - 6 PM to 9 PM

To enroll in CPR classes, call 800-400-4277 or 714-556-4277. Class location is in the HB area and exact location given at time of enrollment.

CERT Database

Fire Department Volunteers (CERT members) have the opportunity to be added to the new CERT database by contacting Peter Petrelis at pgpworks@verizon.net to update their information.

Upcoming Events

- February 7, 2013 6:30pm State of CERT: Recognition of 2011 and 2012 CERT Fire Department Volunteers, Awards, and General meeting in the Council Chambers
- March 14, 2013 6:00pm Management and General meeting 6:30 pm with guest speaker in B7 / B8.

HB CERT Newsletter Staff

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Attention! If you want something placed in the Upcoming Events, e-mail Judy Ann at jamorris189@yahoo.com

Disaster Preparedness Speakers Available

It is time to schedule a Disaster Preparedness Presentation for your neighborhood, business, school, civic organization or church. This is a perfect way to introduce our "Save-A-Life" Classes to the residents of Huntington Beach. It is easy and it is FREE!

Five Simple Steps:

- Find a place to host an hour-long presentation given by a trained HBFD CERT Volunteer Speaker.
- Choose a convenient date and time for your group.
- Call the CERT Message Line (714-536-5974) or log on the CERT website at www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/cert (click on left column "schedule disaster presentation"). Please give us at least three weeks notice and we will do our best to accommodate your group.
- CERT will provide a flyer to distribute to your neighborhood or group.
- Host to provide simple refreshments to be enjoyed at the end of the meeting. Our CERT Speaker will provide all printed material and even bring a door prize for your guests.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

CERT Website: www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/cert **CERT Contact:** CERT@surfcity-hb.org
CERT Message line 714-536-5974, (THIS IS A MESSAGE LINE ONLY!)