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Firefighters from across the Bay Area joined for a training exercise June 17 at Painted Rock in Moraga.

Photos Sora O'Doherty

## Wildfire preparation plans in full swing for fire season

By Sora O'Doherty

If you are a very early riser, on Memorial Day morning you might have seen Moraga-Orinda Fire District's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein and volunteer Charles McNulty driving around in a little all terrain vehicle with a 14-foot pole strapped to it. They were mapping all of the places where trees were overhanging evacuation routes.

MOFD is laser focused on evacuation routes, because, as Rein said at the June monthly meeting of the Lamorinda Citizen's Emergency Response Team, "We don't have a fire season anymore, we have fire danger all year round." Like so many, MOFD exists in a world where a single stopped vehicle can cause others to perish, as they did in the fires at Paradise, and, 31 years ago, in the Oakland Hills fire, just over the hill from Orinda.

Firefighters from all over the Bay Area including from MOFD, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Bay Regional Parks, San Mateo Central County Fire, San Francisco Fire, and the Livermore Pleasanton Fire Department joined together at a

training exercise June 17 at Painted Rock in Moraga. Other actions being taken now include the prescribed burns of the meadow at Wagner Ranch, lower Wildcat, Bear Ridge, and ridgetop fuel breaks around Sleepy Hollow in Orinda.

There will be a Lamorinda virtual community evacuation exercise on Saturday, Sept. 3, starting at 7:30 a.m. Residents can expect to begin receiving alerts about 8 a.m. Police, fire, and Office of Emergency Services personnel will meet at a fire station to conduct this test of the community warning system.

Rein also talked about a proposal scheduled to come before the MOFD board to establish the purchase of fire mesh which would be provided at no cost to residents. He explained that while 1/16-inch mesh is more effective at preventing embers from entering attic spaces, it also requires more maintenance to allow air flow; 1/8-inch mesh is a little less effective at preventing embers but provides better air flow to the attic.

While MOFD is focused on what they can do in the event of fires, what Chief Dave Winnacker really wants to communicate is what residents can do to

help themselves. As Rein explained, there are three factors that affect the behavior of wildfires: fuel, weather, and topography. The only one that we can control is fuel, it is the one component we have some ability to deal with. To that end, Winnacker has been urging residents to cut grass to a maximum of 3 inches in height, to break up non-irrigated shrubs and bushes so that they do not form a continuous fuel bed, to trim and limb tree branches to provide a minimum of 5 feet of clearance from the ground, to remove dead or dying trees, and to maintain roadside clearances 15 feet vertically and 3 feet horizontally from the asphalt roadway.

Under the Fire Adapted Community Ambassadors program, volunteers from the community will, upon request, come to your home to evaluate your property for fire code compliance, with tips on how to make your home safer, Rein explained. This involves no enforcement, and is only an educational program. With 14,000 parcels in the MOFD area, it is not possible for MOFD to get to each parcel, so this volunteer program helps.

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### Orinda 4th of July Parade

**Monday, July 4 at 10 a.m.**

**Pancake Breakfast at 7:30 a.m., Fun Run at 8 a.m.**

[www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org)

## Lamorinda Fourth of July festivities will finish with a bang



By Vera Kochan

Get ready to celebrate the Fourth of July in a big way as Moraga and Orinda plan on keeping residents and visitors alike busy throughout the en-

tire day.

Orinda starts the day's festivities with an "Orinda Keep On Truckin'" theme. Show up hungry between 7:30 to 10 a.m. for the pancake breakfast at the Library Plaza, but don't miss the flag raising at 7:55 a.m. Stretch

those calf muscles for the 8 a.m. Fun Run For A Reason (more info at [www.sudc.org/wesley](http://www.sudc.org/wesley)), or help exercise your brain with a 9 a.m. visit to the Library Book Sale. The parade starts at 10 a.m. on the Theatre side, followed by Music In The Park at 11:30 a.m. (bring your own picnic or order ahead from local restaurants). For more info and a map of the parade route visit: [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

Moraga continues the July 4th celebration with a one-stop party at the Moraga Commons Park located at the corner of St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road. The Dog Parade at 11 a.m. gets the day off to a howling good start (registration at the bandshell). Between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. folks can visit the many community

booths, and kids can hop-'til-they-drop on the inflatable jumpies. Food, wine and beer booths will be on hand to serve hungry and thirsty revelers between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., and everyone can take part in the family activities (throughout the park) between noon and 3 p.m.

As evening starts to settle in, the entertainment begins at 6:45 p.m. when the National Anthem and mayor's welcome take place at the bandshell followed with a 7 p.m. concert by House Rockers. No Fourth of July celebration would be complete without fireworks, so end the evening with a bang as the night sky lights up with the rockets' red glare at approximately 9:30 p.m. For more info or to help Buy-A-Rocket visit: [www.moragarec.com](http://www.moragarec.com).

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