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MOFD, Orinda Police Hillside Rescue Saves Orinda Resident

By Lucy Amaral



Photo provided by MOFD

Paramedic Steve Gehling and Captain J. Lee arrived within five minutes of receiving the dispatch call, said MOFD Battalion Chief Darrell Lee. A second team of firefighters arrived shortly thereafter and was sent down with equipment to stabilize the car and, along with the Orinda Police, helped free the victim.

According to Lee, the car went straight down the hillside, landing against some brush and a small dirt berm. "The car was in a precarious position," said Lee. "The bush was keeping the car from sliding another 200 feet down the hill."

Once the driver was freed from the car, Lee said paramedics treated a laceration on her lower leg. A third firefighting team arrived and set up a rope and pulley system to bring her up to the side of the road. "Because of the steepness of the hillside, the four firefighters (working at the crash site) needed to hold onto the basket to stabilize it to get up the hill safely," said Lee.

Lee said that the driver was roadside in less than 30 minutes from the time MOFD was dispatched and at John Muir Hospital in less than 45 minutes.

The police officers noted there was no indication of intoxication, said Jennings, and no charges will be filed. He said that the driver was released from John Muir Hospital the next day and is expected to make a full recovery.

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On April 17th, Orinda Police and Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Firefighter/Paramedics executed the hillside rescue of a woman whose car had gone 150 feet down the cliffside on Altarinda Road in Orinda.

Lafayette resident Maura Nicolini said she was driving behind the victim, who was traveling eastbound on Altarinda, at about 3:15 p.m. Nicolini said the car was driving erratically up the hill before making a hard right turn, jumping the curb and landing 150 feet down the embankment. Nicolini said she simultaneously called 911 and turned back toward the Orinda Police Department, stopping in front of the department and alerting police.

According to Orinda Police Chief Jeffrey Jennings, officers Albert Agadier and Jesus Gogo were first on the scene. "The officers saw what was going on and without hesitation headed down the slope and made their way to the car," he said.

Jennings said the victim, an elderly, female Orinda resident, was conscious but unaware of the events of the previous few moments.

MOFD's paramedic unit from Station 45 in Orinda with Firefighter/