



CHRISTMAS TREE HILL NRG
www.cthnrg.org / cthnrg@gmail.com
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Sunday, January 29, 2023

Location: Cynthia England's house, 3B Corte Madera Avenue

4:00 PM Call to order and welcome

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Members attending: Beth O'Neill, Cynthia England, Brandon Hemley, Anita Bock, Steve Kaplan, Debra Sartell, Soren Jensen, Cinda van Lierop.

- 1. General Updates and Budget Update:** The account balance is \$2,719. Barring unforeseen circumstances there appears to be no need for fundraising this year.
- 2. 2023 Leadership:** The following 2023 leadership appointments were made at the December meeting and affirmed:
Chair: Cynthia England | Co-Chair: Pending*
*Anita will act in this capacity until a co-chair is appointed
Zone Coordinators:
Zone 1 - Debra Sartell Zone 5 - Leslie Cunningham
Zone 2 - Brandon Hemley Zone 6 - Stephanie Seiler
Zone 3 - Linda Meier Zone 7 - Mark Brooks
Zone 4 - Beth O'Neill
- 3. Incident and Drill Debriefing:** Lessons learned from the following two recent incidents and the November 2022 drill were discussed
 - Kite Hill vegetation fire | September 2022
 - Palm Avenue / Madrone Canyon house fire | January 2023

Notes from the November 2022 drill debriefing, which took place immediately following the drill, are attached.

Those present revisited some of the key protocols and best practices when there is an emergency:

- Any available team member who becomes aware of an incident of concern on the hill should text 415-238-2195 and their ZC with any known information, turn on their radio, and log on to Pulse Point. A ZC who receives such a text should turn on their radio, log on to Pulse Point and text their BCs if and when they have accurate information to share. As needed, BCs should stand ready to contact the residents in their block.
- ZCs and BCs should have the contact information for the entire CTH NRG team in their phone contact list. Ideally, BCs should also list the contact numbers of the residents in their block.
- ZCs should set up text groups so that they can rapidly communicate with their BCs and Cynthia. Note: contacts should be listed by their names so that group texts identify each individual sender.
- Alert Marin messages will only be received by people in areas identified by the Marin Sheriff/Central Marin Police Authority as residing in a zone/area that is at risk. General information messages are sent via Nixle. Check your message settings and make sure that you permit alert overrides when your sound is off.

- It appears that rags used to apply flammable/combustible materials have been a factor in many of the fires on and in the vicinity of CTH. To educate residents about this danger we will post disposal guidelines to our website:
<https://www.wikihow.com/Safely-Store-and-Dispose-of-Flammable-Rags> |
<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/oily-rags-spontaneous-combustion/>
 A link to same information (if it exists) on the FireSafe Marin website will be added.

4. **March 2023 Drill:** Initially it was suggested that we do an evacuation drill and invite residents to evacuate from the hill by car at 10:00 AM on the day of the drill. Anita contacted Central Marin Police Chief Michael Norton to determine his interest in participating at which time Chief Norton cautioned that an issue with an evacuation drill is that there is no traffic control at the two CTH exit points, which means that traffic will back up and not provide an accurate assessment of evacuation speed. Whereas in a real evacuation there would be traffic control. He suggested instead that we consider inviting residents to participate in what he termed a 'driveway drill', i.e., preparing to evacuate without actually leaving your home. **The attached draft flyer fully explains the process.** Those present agreed that this approach would provide residents with a better preparedness educational opportunity and the format was adopted. We will explore creating a website tool for residents to use to report participation, the time it took them to prepare for evacuation and document lessons learned from the exercise. Cinda suggested that we remind residents to be prepared to evacuate by car and on foot. As usual, we will invite residents to participate via flyer (draft attached) and by posting drill details on NextDoor. Flyers should be distributed no later than March 4-5th.
5. **Trailer Maintenance:** A call for volunteers to take care of routine annual maintenance was kindly responded to by Chas, Soren and Brandon. Anita provided them with detailed maintenance instructions and a checklist and they will notify Cynthia of the annual maintenance schedule they set up. Soren also kindly agreed to provide us with information on procuring 2 blocks to prevent the trailer from tipping forward when the back door is opened.
6. **Boosting Radio Signals | New Radios:** Peter Mazones, the Madrone Canyon NRG leader, has done extensive research into how best to boost radio signals in hilly areas using a repeater and antenna and he has been consulting with us regarding options. **His analysis is attached.** Before we decide to go with a new system Peter has suggested that we test the system he has configured and he is willing to do so with us. Soren has volunteered to coordinate the test and will make his solar panel system available for the test. Soren will report back and keep us posted.
7. **Block Captain Recruitment:** A significant number of BC vacancies exist in Zones 1 and 3 and a meeting with the ZCs will be scheduled in the near future to discuss how best we can go about launching a recruitment campaign to fill all BC vacancies.
8. **CTH Firewise Board:** Brandon has kindly offered to chair the CTH Firewise Board for 2023, taking over this role from Connor. The ZCs and Anita and Cynthia serve on the Board which will meet briefly twice a year immediately after regular monthly meetings around April-June and October-November.
9. **New/Other Business:** We recognized and thanked Anita for her hard work on behalf of our NRG and the residents of CTH and presented her with a gift certificate, a donation was also made in her honor to the Marin Human Society. Anita expressed her appreciation for the privilege and pleasure of serving as chair for the past 4 years, thanked everyone for the generous gifts, and recognized Cinda for her contribution as a founding member of CTH NRG.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Attachments

1. November 2022 Drill debriefing notes
2. March 2023 Drill flyer draft
3. Emails from Peter Mazonas re radio signal boosting options

REMINDERS | UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:

- **Next radio test.** Please RSVP promptly when the invitation is received:

February 13	Monday	8:00 PM	Christy Smith
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- **Next meeting date:** Sunday, February 26, 2023 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Probably via Zoom

Attachment 1 CTH NRG NOVEMBER 2022 Drill Debriefing

An after-action disaster drill review is not intended to critique or grade success or failure. Rather, its purpose is to identify areas that need improvement and best practices that might be built on and sustained.

The de-briefing discussion should answer 3 basic questions:

1. What was supposed to happen?
2. What did happen?
3. What caused the difference and what can we learn and incorporate into future training and responses?

1. What was supposed to happen?

Attached below is a brief synopsis of key response steps that should ideally have occurred in each of the 4 drill teams, namely: Command Team, MED 2 (First Aid Field Unit) Team, CTH CERT Team, and Block Captain Assessment Team.

Each drill, like each disaster, is unique and the drill outline and instructions laid out a scenario that should have guided the actions of each response team. In addition, various home/resident specific drill scenarios were provided to guide each team's response strategies.

2. What did happen?

General observations:

- Despite a Command Center announcement some teams started the drill prematurely and commenced radio traffic before being requested to do so. More thorough pre-drill briefings by team leaders and careful attention to Command Center radio communications might have prevented this;
- Transportation difficulties due to the inadequacy of cloth stretches were encountered by the Block Captain and CERT teams;
- Chapman Node communication was spotty;
- A couple of radios malfunctioned or were not adequately charged;
- Radio reception was spotty;
- Some home assessments were less than adequately comprehensive based on the scenarios provided;
- The need to assign roles based on each team member's strengths, temperament, and skill level was highlighted;
- The medical /first-aid team lacked a few essential supplies;
- The need for a more streamlined assessment form became apparent;
- If all team members attend Command Team training communications flow will be improved;
- More practice opportunities for the CERT team will enhance response performance;

Individual feedback:

Steve K (BC Team lead):

- Radio reception poor at times – static
- Stretches too difficult to use for transportation
- Moving injured to the Medical Team was extremely challenging and if there were heavier victims it would not have been possible to transport them.
- Transportation protocols may need modification

- BC | CERT coordination needs practice
- Cinda (CERT Team lead):
- Radio use skills need to be enhanced
 - CERT team needs more practice
 - Important for people to try different roles and cross train
- Nick:
- Important to carry batteries for radios
 - Nothing happens fast – important to slow down and keep calm on radio
 - We should do scenario practices on radio tests
- Soren:
- Important to have backpacks with necessary supplies
 - Realized that not everyone is well-suited to certain tasks, e.g., Command Center radio communications are very challenging, task not well-suited to my skill set
 - Drills provide excellent and much needed opportunity for practice
- Jean:
- Radio challenges. Discussion – important to know radio features, H|M|L power settings, etc.
- Leslie:
- Good communication and follow-up (use of Command Center activity reporting board facilitated this)
 - Might be a good idea for ZCs to identify ‘transporters’
- Jordan:
- Med Team 2 worked very well as a team
 - Important to remember that not everyone that is injured needs to be transported
- Chenin:
- Should we have a transport team? Discussion. There has to be a safer way to transport patients – solid frame stretchers, chair transports. Does everyone have to be transported? Better to have a roving med team?
 - Need collars for head and neck injuries
- Anita:
- Strongly recommend FADR training for all team members – many issues highlighted in the debriefing are covered in this training
- Ken:
- We need a better assessment form*
- *Post drill note: Anita has drafted one – it will be sent to the ZCs for review and approval)
- Connor:
- Need to tweak the form used at medical intake (Connor please provide more feedback)

In conclusion, the drill was a success and our primary goals of giving people a chance to practice and hone response skills and benefit from hands on lessons learned were achieved.

3. What caused the difference and what did we learn from the drill?

- Radio communications need more practice, and training in radio use will benefit team
- Boosting radio signals on the hill (by using a repeater and antenna) is essential to improving radio communications
- All team members will benefit from FADR and Command Team training
- Focused attention on Command Team communications and slowing down long enough to clarify instructions/ requests and general radio communications will enhance team performance

- Developing a better transportation protocol and procuring better stretchers should enhance our ability to transport safely and effectively when necessary
- The CERT team would benefit from more practice
- Team leaders need to ensure that team briefings are comprehensive
- Having needed supplies on hand is important
- In addition, see notes above.

CTH COMMAND | Lead: Anita
Call sign: 'CTH COMMAND'

Command Team: Leslie (scribe) | Soren (radio)
Nick (injured volunteers)

- Get organized: set up table, chairs, radios, supplies, recording materials, etc.;
- Have volunteers sign in and prepare to assume Command Team roles, and position injured teenagers
- Make opening radio message activating CTH Command on Channel 29; give instructions re: radio communications (e.g., medical always takes preference), open communications for assessments, etc.
- Set up one radio for CERT Ch 15|15 and monitor for CERT Command activation, report to CERT as needed (follow NRG-CERT communications protocol);
- Set up one radio for Chapman Node Ch 19|4 and report activation to Chapman Node;
- Halt radio traffic for injury and emergency reports;
- Deploy CTH CERT team as needed/requested by BC Teams;
- Record all incoming and outgoing information;
- Use recording system to record who needs answers/updates/responses;
- Sketch out infrastructure reports on map;
- Share relevant vitally needed information only;
- Practice handing-off to other team members;
- Gather, organize and distill information for drill de-briefing.

CTH NRG MED 2 | FIRST- AID FIELD UNIT | Lead: Chenin

MED 2 Team: Jordan, Linda, Alexia, Stephanie, Connor (Rebecca and Elizabeth may drop in)

Call sign: 'CTH MED 2'

- Set up field unit: tables, chairs, forms, sign in sheet, supplies, mats, etc.;
- Organize area to facilitate smooth flow of injured, triage activities, etc.;
- Have volunteers sign in and assign volunteers to key roles based on experience – radio, administration, triage, patient care, etc.;
- Notify CTH Command when ready to activate MED 2 and report how many volunteers have reported for duty;
- Monitor radio traffic;
- Identify and log in the injured as they arrive, triage, treat and monitor;
- Keep accurate records of all people treated – list injury, treatment and time of treatment;
- Report serious | emergency injuries that cannot be treated by MED 2 (if any) to CERT via CTH Command;
- If life threatened injured person (e.g., someone who is bleeding out or in cardiac arrest) cannot be transported to field unit send out a medically trained or FADR trained person to assess and assist if staffing allows;
- At end of drill team leader to oversee packing-up of supplies and gather, organize and distill information for de-briefing.

CTH CERT TEAM | Lead: Cinda
Call sign: 'CTH CERT'

CERT Team: Beth, Debra, Mark, Cynthia

- Have volunteers sign in and brief team on NRG-CERT protocols and forms;
- Report activation readiness to CTH Command and provide the number of CERT volunteers who have reported for duty;
- Report CTH CERT team activation to CERT Command
- Stand by for deployment to provide search and rescue as requested by BC teams;
- Monitor radio traffic;
- Transport injured to MED 2 when requested;
- Receive requests from CTH Command and provide updates and information as needed;
- At end of drill team leader to gather, organize and distill information for de-briefing.

CTH BLOCK CAPTAIN TEAM | Lead: Steve Kaplan

**Team 1: Jean and Mariellen | Team 2: Christy and Deborah | Team 3: Joe and Ken |
Team 4: Dan and Al**

Call signs: 'CTH BC LEAD' and 'BC Team 1', 'BC Team 2', 'BC Team 3' and 'BC Team 4'

- Have team members sign in and report number of BCs available for duty;
- Brief team on assessment protocols (BC Training Manual), and injury reporting protocols;
- Make assignments based on number of homes and available BCs;
- Follow instructions on homes that are signed for assessment and report injuries and situations (search and rescue) that require CTH CERT intervention;
- Monitor all radio traffic;
- Carry out assessments consistent with guidelines outlined in BC Training Manual;
- Report assessments, injuries and emergencies to CTH Command;
- Coordinate with CTH CERT team to transport injured residents to MED 2 Field Unit for triage and treatment as needed;
- Coordinate with CTH CERT team through CTH Command to treat injured if they cannot be transported to MED 2;
- Record all assessments and injuries;
- Report relevant hazard and injury information to CTH Command;
- At end of drill team leader to gather, organize and distill information for de-briefing.

Attachment 2



**CHRISTMAS TREE HILL
NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONSE GROUP**

DRAFT

Neighbors-helping-neighbors prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters

See <https://www.cthnrg.org/maps--blocks.html> to find out which Zone and Block your home is in and who your Block Captain is.

February 2023

Dear Neighbors,

Greetings from your Christmas Tree Hill Neighborhood Response Group Team.

When clocks change in March and November each year NRGs across central Marin engage in disaster preparation drills in an effort to better prepare residents and NRG volunteers to respond to disasters and emergencies like wildfires, earthquakes and power outages. **THIS MARCH OUR NRG TEAM WILL FOCUS ON EVACUATION BY URGING YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE ON MARCH 12th.** Evacuation may be required due to the threat and impact of natural hazard events such as wildfires and earthquakes so as to save and protect the lives of CTH residents exposed to actual or imminent danger. When an evacuation warning or order is received timely and rapid movement to safer locations and places of shelter will be essential. In a wildfire situation there may be a need to evacuate in a very short period of time and because CTH has narrow streets and only 2 exit routes planning for an evacuation is critical.

WE URGE YOU TO PARTICIPATE BY TAKING THE STEPS OUTLINED IN THE ATTACHED CHECKLIST TO ENSURE THAT YOU, YOUR FAMILY, LOVED ONES AND PETS CAN EVACUATE OFF THE HILL QUICKLY AND SAFELY SHOULD THE NEED EVER ARISE. SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2023 from 10:00 – 11:00 AM

EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST TO FOLLOW ATTACHED

We also urge you, in advance of the drill, to:

- Make sure that you, your family, and any caregivers you use are registered for emergency alerts
 - *Alert Marin:* <https://www.marinsheriff.org/services/emergency-services/alert-marin>
 - *Nixle:* <https://local.nixle.com/register/>
 - *PG&E:* <https://www.pge.com/>
- Make sure that you, your family, and any caregivers you use know where your nearest evacuation route(s) are and that you prepare an evacuation plan:
<https://emergency.marincounty.org/pages/evacuation>
- Make sure that your emergency supply kit is fully stocked:*
 - <https://www.safetyactioncenter.pge.com/articles/26-quiz-do-know-pack-emergency-kit>
 - <https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/evacuation-go-kit/>
 - <https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/create-an-evacuation-plan/>

**IN ADDITION TO THE DRILL DAY EVACUATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST, A
CTH EVACUATION MAP AND EVACUATION GUIDE IS ATTACHED.**

MARCH 12, 2023

CTH NRG EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE CHECK LIST

Evacuation Preparedness Exercise Scenario

At 10:00 AM assume that an evacuation warning has been issued for CTH by either the Marin Sheriff or the Central Marin Fire Authority using Alert Marin. Nixle and police care Hi Lo signals might also be activated. Because the authorities strongly recommend that you NOT wait for a mandatory warning to be issued, you immediately start preparing to evacuate as soon as possible using the checklist below.

In preparation for the exercise we urge you to review the Evacuation Guide attached; we also urge you to have your children of appropriate age participate in the preparedness exercise.

A crucial element of the exercise is to time how long it takes you, your family/loved ones and pets to be evacuation ready. Setting the stop watch on your phone would work well. You should also make a note of which items on your checklist you were unable to carry out and why, so that you can use that information to be better prepared in the future.

Evacuation Preparedness Exercise Key Items Checklist. You can augment this check list after reviewing the Evacuation Guide attached

- Alert your children to what is about to happen and if they are 5 or older have them pack a small go bag with weather appropriate clothing for at least 2 days
- Locate your pet carriers and your pets and secure them until you are ready to mock evacuate
- Prepare a go-bag for your pets with at least 2 days of food and water and other key essentials – water, food, meds, bowls, leashes, poop bags, pet beds, etc.
- Gather and pack any medications* that you need to take with you
- Gather your important documents* (ideally these should already be on a thumb drive or photographed/scanned and stored on your devices)
- Gather your cell phones*, chargers*, and computers*

*Make sure that these items are in a backpack or carry bag in case you need to abandon your car.

- Pack you own go-bag
- Put on sturdy shoes (everyone) in the event an evacuation on foot becomes necessary
- If you do not already have an emergency go bag in your car, pack one – flashlight, water, car charger(s), extra batteries, emergency cash, a pair of work gloves, masks (preferably N95)
- Pack enough water and non-perishable food/snacks for you and your family for at least 2 days
- Identify and make a list of the items in your home that can be quickly gathered and easily transported in a hurry that you consider irreplaceable (items like photos, heirloom jewelry, etc., -remember that in a wildfire situation you might, if trapped by fire, have to abandon your car

As you go through this exercise, we urge you to remember that if a mandatory evacuation is ordered you might have mere minutes to gather your family and pets and get into your car and off the hill, so having pre-packed go-bags, documents already stored on devices, pet carriers at the ready, etc., could save your life and the lives of your family and pets. We urge you always to park your car facing outwards. With only 2 exits off CTH evacuation traffic management will become a very real challenge and time spent backing out of driveways and car parks could seriously hamper our collective ability to evacuate rapidly and safely.

HOW DID YOU DO? HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO GET READY? LESSONS LEARNED

Attachment 3 Boosting Radio Signals

Begin forwarded message:

From: CTH NRG cthnrg@gmail.com **Subject:** CTH NRG FYI - 2 Way Radio Signal Boosting
Date: January 22, 2023 at 12:53:55 PM PST
To: Debra Sartell <debrasartell@aol.com>, Brandon Hemley <brandon.hemley@gmail.com>, Linda Meier <lmeier906@gmail.com>, Beth O'Neill <bethoneill17@gmail.com>, Leslie Cunningham <lespt2@gmail.com>, Stephanie Seiler <stephanie.j.seiler@gmail.com>, Mark Brooks <smokeythedog@me.com>, Kevin & Collin Woodall <kcnoles@sbcglobal.net>

Hi Steering Committee Members,

If you recall I started looking into options for boosting our radio signals on CTH early last year. I've had ongoing communications with Chip (CERT) and Peter Mazonas, Madrone NRG leader regarding options. Both Peter and Chip are experts on the issue. I recently checked in with a Peter on his research progress and his response is attached.

Cynthia has placed this issue on the January meeting agenda for discussion and based on our team's decision about whether or not to switch to a new system, as the Madrone and Bon Air NRGs are doing, she will coordinate further with Peter and Chip.

Regards,

Anita

Anita M. Bock
For CTH NRG, Sent from my iPhone 415-238-2195

On Sat, Jan 21, 2023 at 5:37 PM Peter Mazonas <Peter@mazonascpa.com> wrote:

Hi – interesting product description of the Midland Repeater, which is actually the rebranded Retevis RT97 that we installed a year ago and Bon Air is currently installing. The problem with Midland, and we have talked to them directly about, is that they still do not have a GMRS handheld capable of working with the repeater. If they do, it may well be a rebranded Retevis. The point is it works well.

Madrone NRG, plus people from Baltimore Park and Blue Rock have tested our Retevis RT97 repeater along with 50 Retevis RT76 repeater capable handhelds over the last year and find the system to be the answer to good communication in areas with hills and other obstructions. Much of the key is antennas. We have also successfully tested the repeater with RT76 handhelds to the back of Madrone Canyon to Bob Air Center, The Village, Cove School and Downtown Larkspur. Our RT97 repeater antenna is mounted above a chimney at our house, 200 feet above sea level. It is both solar powered and has an automatic 22K generator as a backup. Handheld radio signals go up and out. In theory the signal from the handhelds should get blocked by buildings, trees and hills. We have found that a good antenna on the repeater seems to defy that "blocking". We get signals over the hill from Blue Rock and around the corner of a hill from West Baltimore near the Joplin House and from Bon Air.

What Christmas Tree Hill needs to find high up on the hill is a willing homeowner with solar or an automatic generator who is willing to have a 1 inch diameter, 48 inch tall white antenna mounted on their house and have a small repeater box that takes no care and feeding inside the house hooked up to a wall circuit. The repeater only draws 0.04 watts on standby and 4 watts in use (less than the smallest light bulb). You also are going to need repeater capable handhelds for all Block Captains and a repeater capable base station radio. The Chapman Node trailer has a 15 watt Midland in radio box I built for them and a 5 watt iCOM 4001 repeater capable handheld, both contributed to the cause by Central Marin NRG. The iCOM has a removable antenna that, with an adaptor, can be attached to a tall antenna on a painter pole (also contributed to them by CMNRG. Another iCOM that may have never been used to issued to Hidden Valley NRG. They have kept it for use by their medical team, but it could be swapped out for a Retevis RT76.

Our factory direct price for the RT97 is about \$250. Each RT76 high quality handheld is about \$35. The quality of the antenna on the handheld RT76 is excellent. I programed, tear sheet attached, all 30 channels for NRGs in Nodes that seem to be active. Your repeater channel setup is already in our radios as channel 18. I will collect all of the Midland T1000s to donate to new forming NRGs in the Canal and Marin City where the cost of the radios be hold people back.

Madrone NRG converted all of our Block Captains to the Retevis RT76 handhelds. After dealing with problems for 5 years with the Midlands, it was an easy sale. We also bought 10 additional radios to donate to active medical team members in our Node. We have selected younger docs, nurses and National Ski Patrol folks, most of whom have not actively participated to date in the NRG stuff.

Have Cynthia reach out to me to get started.

Peter M. Mazonas
139 Valley Way | Larkspur CA 94939 | (cell) 415.279-7950 | (B) 415.924-6269

From: CTH NRG <cthnrg@gmail.com> **Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2023 10:18 AM
To: Peter Mazonas Peter@MazonasCPA.com **Cc:** Cynthia England <cengland565@gmail.com>
Subject: Radio signal boosting status

Hi Peter,

Just checking in to see if we have any news on testing the new radios and antenna/repeater that you were working on.

Regards, Anita