

Moss Street/28th Avenue neighbors learn what to do in case of major emergency

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

You're working in your garden; the kids are at school; and your partner is still at work.

Suddenly, a 7.9 earthquake hits and all hell breaks loose. Electricity is off; water mains are bursting down the street; and the smell of rotten eggs is prevalent, which you remember is the odor of a gas leak.

The Big One has hit. Now what?

Perhaps it isn't an earthquake. Maybe it's a flood, a storm, or some bacterial incident.

Are you prepared? Some are, some just a little, but most, probably not.

Folks that live in the Moss Street/28th Avenue neighborhood are at least a little bit closer to knowing what to do when the stuff hits the fan.

On one of the hottest Sundays of summer, over 30 neighbors gathered at a private home to meet and learn what to do in a major emergency.

Volunteer neighborhood rescuers will likely be the first on-the-scene when firefighters and police are slowed by impassable streets or overwhelmed by calls for help.

"Not if an emergency happens," emphasized Bob Cogan, Neighborhood Emergency Team captain, "but when an emergency happens, we all need to coordinate as a team."

Whether it's the Big One that seismologists are predicting or a major storm that may hit the Northwest, residents of the Moss Street/28th NET were linked together in a listserv, a list of skills and tools, and communication instructions.

Under the coordination of trained team captains Bob Cogan and his

cousin Jeanne Fitzgerald, participants saw firsthand emergency food rations, water requirements, wind up radios and flashlights, and learned how to put out small fires.

The Portland Fire Bureau's Engine 18 truck arrived to the delight of young and old children alike and firefighters started a couple of fires in an outdoor grill.

The firefighters demonstrated fire extinguisher dos and don'ts, how to put a fire out but still call 9-1-1. How to recognize that your fire extinguisher, that's been stowed away for seven years, most likely doesn't work anymore.

In addition to emergency preparedness, a rare occurrence of three new families moving right in a row within weeks of each other was welcomed to the street.

Erika Nebel, staff from City Commissioner Steve Novick's office, was present to answer any city questions.

"This neighborhood doesn't wait for National Night Out," exclaimed Stuart Ellis, a long-time resident. "We

have national nights out, and days out, year 'round."

According to Ellis, the neighbors have been getting together not only for parties and BBQs, but organized to move hot tubs, help with the semi-annual Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Cleanup, cut downed trees, provide assistance to the elderly, and support a family who lost a loved one.

"Heck! We even share hops and grapes to make wine and beer," said Ellis.

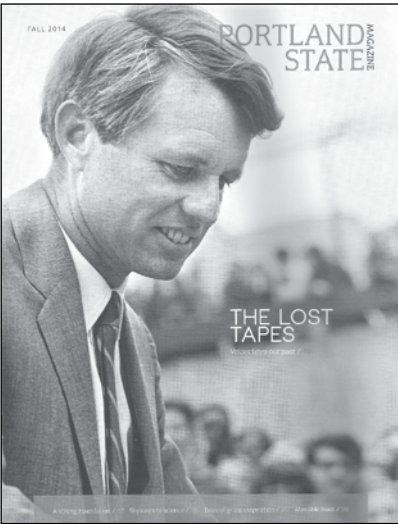
"Some of the neighbors were on the border of the actual Moss Street/28th team boundary," Cogan added, "but



Ken Hittle, puts a small fire out with an extinguisher at the Moss Street/28th neighborhood meeting. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

they came anyway and now will form their own NET that fits their geography and dynamics."

For information on how to form a NET team for your particular area, or how to join an existing NET team, please visit www.netportland.org.



Voices from our past

Running for the Democratic nomination for president in March 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy made a campaign stop at Portland State University. A reel-to-reel audio tape of that event was discovered by an archivist at PSU in 2013, along with more than 250 hours of political speeches from luminaries of the 1950s, '60s and '70s including poet Allen Ginsberg, astronomer Carl Sagan, novelist Toni Morrison, and civil rights activist Stokely Carmichael, just to name a

few. Miraculously, nearly all of the tapes were transferred to a digital format intact. Best of all, they were posted online for all to listen to. Called the Oregon Public Speakers Collection, these amazing voices from our past can be heard at pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/orspeakers. The cover story, "The Lost Tapes" by John Kirkland can be read in the Fall 2014 issue of Portland State Magazine.

— Don Snedecor
(Photo by Craig Hickman)

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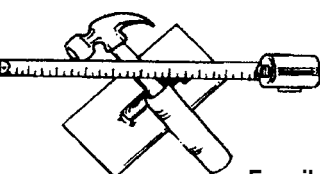
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