



NEWSLETTER

Issue 5

Winter 2009

Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

77 Hudson Road, Sudbury, MA 01776
978-443-2239

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C. Flynn, Editor

OUTREACH:

As noted last month, we were invited to give an Emergency Preparedness presentation at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on January 29. Chief MacLean was keynote speaker, Richard Simon spoke about CERT, and John Stevens spoke about MRC. "Testimonials" were given by several CERT members on why they joined and/or their experiences as members. The guests were quite impressed by CERT's goals and what we have accomplished in two short years as well as by the knowledge they gained.

Several commented that they would be spreading the word about CERT and preparedness. All guests received the FEMA Are You Ready book, and all availed themselves of the many handouts available. Cameraman Cliff McGann filmed the event for Sudbury cable television.

Preparations are under way for the **Goodnow Library's glass display table**, which has been reserved for CERT for the month of March. Please encourage non-members to visit the exhibit.

GO-BAGS.

The *Sudbury Town Crier* recently printed a condensed version of the new PREPAREDNESS document advising residents about Go-Bags. It's hoped that readers without Go-Bags will now prepare them for their families. To view document, see Website.

Please encourage friends and neighbors to visit the CERT Website, where many other new downloadable documents on emergency preparedness have been posted.

TRAINING:

ICS-100 TRAINING continues at our monthly meetings and is nearing its finish. Thanks to Richard Simon, John Stevens, and Steve Monteiro for facilitating these sessions. ICS is a system used nationally to manage emergency efforts and is flexible, responding, in real time, to the demands of an emergency. Each participant should find this tutorial greatly helpful in their online exam thru FEMA.

CO-CHAIR RESIGNATION:

Although she will remain active on the VIP committee, it is with sadness that CERT says goodbye to **Barbara Bahlkow**, who has resigned for family reasons. Her dedication and enthusiasm are greatly responsible for the Go-Bag program and in organizing the Shelter Team, obtaining shelter supplies, evaluating alternate emergency shelters, and coordinating shelter drills, as well as helping guide the Sudbury CERT's future. **Fred Schulz** and **John Stevens** have agreed to sit on the Steering Committee.

CPR CLASSES have been organized for CERT and MRC members through MRC Region 4A, thanks to Marilyn Ellsworth, a member of both CERT and MRC. The American Heart Association method will be taught by MRC member Lily Gordon, who has volunteered her time. Each class will run from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Goodnow Library on your choice of March 4 or March 9. Class size is limited to eight. Cost is free for MRC members and only around \$25 for CERT members. RSVP Victoria Parsons at the Board of Health, 978-443-2209, x1366, or email her at parsonsv@sudbury.ma.us. The MRC Website can also be used to register.

THE NATIONAL CERT NEWSLETTER was forwarded to our membership and should prove informative to everyone.

TOWN WARRANT:

We are fortunate to be in time this year to place a CERT ad in the Town Meeting Warrant, which goes to every household in Sudbury. Also, CERT will be listed at the back of the Warrant in the space entitled, "Volunteer to Serve Your Town."



The flyer features the Sudbury CERT logo at the top left, with the text "SUDBURY CERT COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM". To the right, the large, bold text "ARE YOU READY?" is displayed. Below this, the text reads: "The unexpected happens, be prepared. Learn how to help yourself ♦ your family ♦ your neighbors Become involved ♦ Free training". A small logo for "citizen corps" is also present. The bottom section of the flyer includes the quote: "Volunteer to help Sudbury prepare for the unexpected—Join CERT" ~Fire Chief Kenneth MacLean, followed by "Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)", the website "www.sudbury.ma.us/committees/cert", the email "cert@sudbury.ma.us", and the phone number "978-443-2239". At the bottom, there is a black and white photograph of several people in a training session.

MEDIA: In case anyone missed John Stevens' extraordinary Letter to the Editor in December, it's reprinted here:

Sudbury Town Crier

Tuesday December 23, 2008

Thank you Sudbury MRC and CERT
TO THE EDITOR:

As an Executive Committee Member of the Sudbury Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and a trained and Certified member of Sudbury CERT, I want to express my appreciation and thank you to the members of both volunteer organizations who responded to the 'call for help' from our western and northern neighbors hardest hit by the recent ice storm.

With more than 60 shelters in operation by mid-day Saturday following the Dec. 11 Thursday night storm, finding trained and qualified people to staff them was nearly an impossible challenge. Volunteers from many local CERT and MRC teams around the state were called upon to help care for and comfort hundreds of people who were forced from their homes by the massive and widespread power outages caused by this storm.

Working side-by-side with other professional and volunteer responders, our volunteers from Sudbury CERT and Sudbury MRC made a clear and welcomed contribution over several days and in several shelters.

I particularly want to thank Lorraine Reihle who spent nearly twelve hours on Sunday at a shelter in

Worcester. Lorraine, an executive committee member of the Sudbury MRC, provided her medical nursing knowledge and skills to help care for and mitigate medical issues at the shelter. Under the direction of the Shelter Manager, Lorraine was delegated the responsibility for managing the shelter's volunteer medical team during her time there.

I also want to give a special 'thanks' to Judy Farrell, a trained and certified member of Sudbury CERT, who came out to help me on Saturday at a second Worcester shelter. She spent more than six hours giving comfort and care to the more than fifty elderly and disabled residents congregated at this shelter. She helped organize different social activities and ways to keep people upbeat, engaged, and comfortable as they endured being away from the familiar comforts of their homes. She also maintained a vigilant watch over those struggling with the emotional impact of the experience, and freely gave her time and attention to helping people find their hope, patience, and capacities for coping with the disruptive and trying nature of the situation.

I also want to recognize and thank Liisa Jackson, the MRC Region 4a Coordinator, for her tireless effort to find and place MRC and CERT volunteers from the 34 communities comprising Region 4a with the shelters most in need of medical and non-medical staff. I want to also give a 'thank you' to Richard Simon, Barbara Bahlkow, and Carole Flynn, executive members of Sudbury CERT, for their extraordinary responsiveness in alerting CERT members to the sheltering needs in our neighboring communities.

A final 'thank you' needs to go to Gail Chapman Close and Marilyn Ellsworth, fellow executive members of Sudbury MRC, for their words of encouragement and support during my 14-hour shift as shelter manager in Worcester.

I'm sure that everyone who volunteered their time and effort in response to this event would join me in saying that the experience was extraordinarily fatiguing but incredibly exhilarating. After nearly two years of thinking, planning, and training, the volunteers of Sudbury MRC and Sudbury CERT were able to make a positive difference in a real way.

They were incredible. I am proud to be associated with them.

Thank you!

*Dr. John Stevens
Psychologist and member of
MRC/CERT Sudbury*

And following is John's submission for the February 2009 *Mantle* (St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church)

When Angels are Busy, God Sometimes Sends Real People...My Ice Storm Sheltering Experience *(by John Stevens)*

The massive ice storm that forced thousands of people from their homes and into shelters this past December only narrowly missed us. In fact, I and other members of Sudbury's volunteer emergency response force were put on alert by the Fire Chief in case we had to open a Sudbury shelter at the Fairbanks Senior Center for people whose homes became damaged or lost power and heat because of toppled trees, downed wires, and cracked utility poles. While this call from the Sudbury Fire Chief never came, calls for help from neighboring communities did, and I volunteered to help staff a shelter in Worcester.

When I arrived at the Worcester shelter at 6:30 am on the Saturday after the 11 December Thursday night storm, I found more than 55 people, nearly all of them elderly or with a chronic or debilitating medical condition, sheltered in what was the cafeteria of a small high school. Half of the cafeteria floor space had been converted into a dormitory complete with cots and blankets while the other half served as the 'Day Area' where cafeteria tables with attached benches provided places for those awake and about to sit, eat and wait.

With so many shelters needing to be opened in the aftermath of this storm, there were not enough trained volunteers to properly staff them. I had at least participated in two sheltering drills through my membership with Sudbury CERT, and counted on that experience as I tried to help ensure that people were safe and properly cared for while being sheltered at this facility.

As I made my way around the shelter introducing myself and checking on the medical and personal needs of people, I came across two young girls and their adult-aged aunt. They had just woken up from their overnight at the shelter. Although the girls readily admitted that sleeping on the cots was "not fun", they did not seem particularly distressed or despairing even though they too had apparently been forced from their home by the storm. I learned that they were sisters and in fourth and seventh grade, respectively.

As the morning wore on, it was apparent that there wasn't much for people to do but wait in the make-shift Day Room with the hope of hearing that power was restored and that someone would be coming soon to take them home. Some people were weepy and despairing, some were bored and cranky, and a few needed low-level but ongoing nursing care.

As I did what I could do to organize and coordinate what shelter resources we had, I was curious about these two young girls and their aunt. They seemed to be very alert and observing of everything going on around them, and did not appear to be the least bit 'put out' by the experience of being in a shelter with 50 strangers, nearly all of whom were elderly, physically frail, or medically disabled.

I noticed their aunt sitting quietly to the side watching with a faint smile as the two young girls hastily ate their cereal and began gathering up not only their own trash but the trash of those sitting nearby. They quietly approached each person and, in turn, politely asked if they could "carry away the garbage". Without fanfare and on their own initiative, the girls then began stopping at each table and asking if they could clean up what people were done with. The girls were met with many smiles, a few chuckles, and a lot of "Thank you dearie" or "Bless you child" acknowledgments. As the girls made their rounds, they soon began offering to refill coffee cups, heat water for tea, or bring breakfast to those looking to eat something.

Soon, these two young girls were in full swing running back and forth to the kitchen area delivering breakfast food and drink to those grateful for the 'service'. The girls became the center of everyone's attention as they responded with exaggerated curtsies and flagrantly false accents. Within the hour, a lighthearted and upbeat mood began to take hold of the Day Room. People began conversing with one other, card games were started, and the despairing and agitated behaviors that were so evident earlier had lessened appreciably.

By late-morning the girls and their aunt had packed up what little they had brought with them and prepared to leave. When I asked if they would again be staying at the shelter that night, they simply replied no. The girls, however, asked if they could nonetheless return later in the day and help serve dinner. I told them that we would all be grateful if they did.

The two girls reappeared at the shelter with their aunt just before the dinner serving time. Again, while the aunt stood quietly to the side, these two young girls again demonstrated their gift of caring and hope, and in a very real way elevated the spirits of those congregated at this shelter as they helped serve the evening meal. They were called “angels” by many of the shelter residents, and clearly helped people rediscover their hope, patience, and capacities for

enduring this very disruptive and trying circumstance. Truly, the people that God sends to help and comfort others in times of need come in all sizes.

Sudbury’s volunteer emergency response force needs more members. Please visit www.Sudbury.ma.us, click on “committees” and follow the links to MRC and to CERT. Or feel free to talk with me directly.

The following information is excerpted from a *Town Crier* article on the workings of the Sudbury Police Department:

Helping Yourself:

The following are three recommendations for the public:

- **Protect Identity and Property:** Be careful who you reveal information to, monitor credit reports, and notify the credit bureaus if you think there has been unauthorized use of your identify.
- **Traffic:** Drive through other neighborhoods as you would drive through your own.
- **Investigation:** Don’t be afraid to call the Police Station for any situation. They will find someone to help if they are not the appropriate party to resolve your problem, whether in Sudbury or in another town. And don’t be embarrassed to say what is wrong—our officers have seen everything one can imagine.

Remember, our police personnel are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Available to the public at the Police Station is an Identity Theft pocket slider, which shows types of ID theft, how it is done, monitoring your mailbox, dumpster diving, your wallet contents, your SSN, passwords, PINs & ATM. On the reverse is a list of Computer Safeguards.

The magazine Crime in America—Don’t be a Victim is also available there, at the Town Clerk’s office, and in the Flynn Building near the Assessors’ office.

Sudbury maintains a “No Call List,” whereby door-to-door solicitors must not call on your home, even when they have obtained an official permit to canvass Sudbury residents. (A permit is not required of non-profit, religious, or political groups.) Contact or visit the Police Station to register.

VISIT THE MEMA WEBSITE, where you will find Precautions for Extreme Cold Weather, Roof Collapse & Storm Drain Warning, Ice Storm Debris Removal Contractors around the country, Post-Storm Tips, Pet Safety Tips for the Winter Months, Winter Power Outage Tips, Keep Warm, Keep Safe this Winter, Call 2-1-1 for

Non-Emergency Assistance, Ice Safety Precautions, as well as the following on Winter Weather Preparedness. Although we’ve already experienced severe weather this year, winter returns regularly! Most suggestions we’re aware of, but a few may be new:

Winter Weather Preparedness Information

MEMA has issued information to help people prepare for another New England Winter Season. Attached is a list of items to be included in your Winter Emergency Car Kit, as well as your family's Winter Disaster Supply Kit, as well as the development of a Family Emergency Communications Plan.

"Now is the proper time for individuals and families to take the necessary steps to ensure their safety both on the roads and at home during the upcoming Winter Season," said MEMA Director Don Boyce. "Winter weather can present challenges that can be made easier with some basic preparedness planning."

SUGGESTED WINTER EMERGENCY CAR KIT

Keep the following items in your car in case of emergency during a Winter Storm:

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Charged cell phone
- Basic first-aid kit
- Necessary medications
- Pocket knife
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra clothes (include rain gear, mittens, socks)
- High-calorie, non-perishable foods (dried fruits, nuts, canned food)
- Non-electric can opener
- Container of water
- Shovel
- Sand for generating traction
- Tire chains or traction mats
- Basic tool kit (pliers, wrench, screwdriver)
- Tow rope
- Road flares
- Brightly colored cloth to utilize as a flag

Ensure that your tires have adequate tread and keep your gas tank at least half-full. Keep a windshield scraper and small broom for ice and snow removal. Check your windshield wiper fluid and keep your gas tank at least half-full. Plan long trips carefully, listening to the radio or NOAA Weather Radio for the latest weather forecasts and road conditions. Travel during the day, and if possible, try to take someone along with you.

Those who already have an All-Hazard Emergency Preparation Kit, as MEMA continues to suggest, should be in fine shape already. Everyone should have some non-perishable food, bottled water, flashlights and extra batteries around the house, along with a portable radio or NOAA Weather Radio in case of power outages or other emergencies caused by a winter storm.

Additional items that should be included on your Winter Weather Supply List are a freshly-stocked first-aid kit, essential prescription medicines, non-perishable foods (those that require no refrigeration such as canned goods, dried fruits and nuts), a non-electric can opener, water (one gallon per-person, per-day), baby-care items, extra blankets, sleeping bags and a fire extinguisher.

"Every household should develop a Family Emergency Communication Plan in case family members are separated from one another during a storm. That is a real possibility during the day if adults are at work and children are at school," said Boyce.

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Keep suggested sheltering-in-place items around the house in case of emergency during a winter storm, and make a Family Emergency Communication Plan. (See MEMA site.)



WINTER Poem

It's winter in New England
And the gentle breezes blow
Seventy miles an hour
At thirty-five below.

Oh, how I love New England
When the snow's up to your butt
You take a breath of winter
And your nose gets frozen shut.

Yes, the weather here is wonderful
So I guess I'll hang around
I could never leave New England
I'm frozen to the ground.