

The Sit Rep

Newsletter of the NYC Office of Emergency Management

Keeping Tradition Afloat

by OEM Legal Unit

Editor's Note

Happy New Year and welcome to the first *Sit Rep* of 2011. The year's end left the city covered in a paralyzing and extraordinary blanket of snow and it appears there is more on the way. Bundle up for an active winter at OEM. For our feature story, the OEM Legal unit gives insight on safety coordination at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. As the first major event to kick off the holiday season, the cooperation and assistance from City agencies have become essential elements for this occasion.

This was a busy quarter for a number of OEM units. The Ready New York unit held the first annual Ready New York Day at OEM. OEM's GIS Division's third annual GIS Day honored the 200th anniversary of the Commissioner's Plan of 1811. Read more about both events inside.

Just in time to support those New Year's resolutions like, join the gym and throw out the junk food, the *Sit Rep* presents a new health section this issue. This quarter's health feature highlights the winner of OEM's first annual Biggest Loser contest. Get inspired and get involved.

As always, the latest and the greatest in life events for OEM staffers can be found in our Milestones section while updates about office news and culture are in OEM News. Your story ideas and feedback are welcome and greatly appreciated. Please send them to Stephanie Roy, sroy@oem.nyc.gov



Aviator Snoopy leads the way at the 2010 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Originally known as the “Macy’s Christmas Parade”, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade is one of New York City’s most cherished traditions. Employees, entertainers, and animals on loan from the Central Park Zoo marched the first route from 145th Street in Harlem to the flagship store on 34th Street in 1924. Because many of the store’s employees were first-generation immigrants from countries such as Italy, Poland, and Germany, they wanted to celebrate the American holiday by combining it with the traditional Christmas pageants of Europe.

As the Parade’s most featured attraction, the balloons were added in 1927, replacing the zoo animals that marched the first three years. Originally, the first balloons were released at the end of the Parade, each with a return address.

Whoever returned the balloons received a Macy’s gift certificate or other prize. Although Felix the Cat was the first character balloon introduced, the Snoopy balloon, which debuted in 1968, is the longest running character.

Throughout the last seven decades, the balloons have grown considerably in number, size, and popularity. It’s no surprise that many of the Parade’s accidents and mishaps have been related to the inflatable works of art. During the 1997 parade, the Cat in the Hat balloon hit a street lamp on Central Park West, causing the fixture to fall on a group of spectators and resulting in one serious and several minor injuries. A similar incident occurred in 2005 when the ropes of the M&M balloon pulled the lamp head off

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Spider-Man balloon in final preparation

of a street light, causing the lamp head to fall onto the viewing area below and injuring spectators.

Both the 1997 and 2005 mishaps lead Mayor Giuliani and Mayor Bloomberg to create respective task forces to study the accidents and recommend changes in procedure needed to ensure the safety of future parades. The task forces consisted of representatives from the Mayor's Office, various City agencies, expert engineering consultants, wind dynamic specialists, and OEM as the coordinating body.

OEM works with other agencies and partners to ensure preliminary safety measures are met for the event. This includes approving parade maps, balloon flight specifications, wind monitoring systems, training Macy's

Parade personnel, and conducting numerous Parade walk-throughs.

OEM manages an interagency meeting at the Command Post to review pre-event conditions, Parade safety issues, and operational considerations. The Parade may only begin with the approval of the Command Post.

During the weeks of preparation before and on the day of, the event now has a clear system of coordination and authority. OEM is responsible for interagency coordination, agency support, and incident communications on the day of the Parade. The Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS) has been integral in the coordination and management of the Parade.

From an original audience of one million, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade has grown to a spectatorship of an estimated 2.5 million onlookers (that's like 50 Yankee Stadiums full of people), while another 44 million watch it on television. The Parade has been one of New York City's most spectacular events since it began in 1924. OEM will continue its role of close cooperation, intra-agency organization and technical innovation to keep the tradition a safe and enjoyable experience for many years to come.

Fun Parade Facts:

The first balloons were filled with helium, and when released above the city as part of the grand finale they unexpectedly burst. A prompt redesign featured safety valves that continue today.

In order to do their part for the war effort, Macy's deflated their balloons during WWII, from 1942 to 1944, and donated the scrap rubber to the government.

Tom the Turkey is the oldest float, first introduced in 1971.

The first female character balloon was Olive Oil, which debuted in 1982.

Jolly ol' Santa has brought up the rear of the Parade every year, except for 1933, when he led the balloons and floats in their march to 34th Street.

True New Yorkers know the Parade is not technically over until the Sanitation Department comes through to pick up after the NYPD mounted units.

Baby Boom



Phoebe Mairead Kane

10/21/2010

8 lbs, 3 ozs

Born to Judith and Tim Kane

MILESTONES

Congratulations to Heather Roiter who married Kevin Damiano on New Year's Eve 2010 in a ceremony along the Hudson River in Weehawken, NJ. Following the big event, the bride and groom took a "mini-moon" to Ochos Rios, Jamaica. They're planning a full honeymoon to a Mediterranean destination in August 2011.

Also in nuptial news, Erin Rampe recently got engaged on November 5, 2010. She is currently planning a wedding for October 2011 in her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

On January 1, 2011, Paula Carlson took the plunge—as in the Coney Island Polar Plunge. In an effort to raise enough money to send 15 families to Camp Sunshine, Paula and many other participants jumped into the Atlantic Ocean for the annual New Year's Day Swim. Camp Sunshine is a retreat for children with life threatening diseases and their families.



Ready New York Day 2010

by Amber Greene



Kristine Gregorek practices CPR during Ready NY Day 2010

When it comes to preparing and responding to emergencies in the city, OEM receives top marks. We set up shelters, train first responders and

relay information. But as for preparing ourselves, we (including me) can all do a little better.

As part of National Preparedness Month, the Ready New York unit held its first Ready New York Day at OEM on September 22. The event helped fellow staff members become better prepared through training, activities, and fun contests with a preparedness spin on familiar games such as *Tic-Tac-Toe* and *Minute to Win-It*.

Because many OEM staff members are not first responders by profession, the Ready New York team figured it would be helpful to learn some lifesaving techniques, just in case. We were fortunate to have the American Red Cross provide basic first aid training to staff members, as 30 people learned CPR from the FDNY

– EMS CPR Awareness Training Unit. Participants received an instructional video and a mannequin to teach others this lifesaving skill.

The FDNY Smoke House, Department for the Aging and the DKMS (Deutsche Knochenmarkspenderdatei) Bone Marrow Center also joined the event. Seventeen people signed up with DKMS for placement on the National Bone Marrow registry, which helps those living with leukemia and other blood disorders.

The idea for Ready New York Day came from a conversation Christina Farrell had with Virginia Mewborn, who suggested we do an event similar to GIS Day. Our best ideas come from here at OEM, so if you think of something new that can be helpful to promote preparedness, share it!

Health Living: Losing is Winning

by Lisa Schulman



OJ 2010 leans on OJ 2008 at the OEM Holiday party.

Notice how many of your colleagues slimmed down drastically in 2010? Thanks to what started as a casual conversation between Craig Bonney and Natan Mandelbaum, OEM's first-ever "Biggest Loser" contest was created. No one lost as much weight as Onofrio "OJ" DeMattia, winner of

OEM's 2010 Biggest Loser. During the contest's four months, OJ lost 37.5 lbs.

"It feels incredible being the OEM Biggest Loser. I have been trying to lose weight for quite some time, but I suppose all I needed was the proper motivation—this came from friendly competition," said OJ. He looks and feels great, and he is excited to look slim at his wedding in the spring.

"Everyone doubted me and began claiming, 'He lost weight too fast. He won't be able to keep it off or continue at that pace,'" OJ explained about his friends. "I wanted nothing more than to prove everyone wrong. Forty pounds later, I am victorious...and skinny!"

According to Craig, he and Nate would often challenge each other to weight-loss contests. Early in 2010, a colleague overheard them discussing such a challenge and expressed her interest in joining the competition. Soon others in the agency found out about this friendly weight-loss challenge and wanted in.

In June, Craig posted flyers promoting the program throughout OEM headquarters. The contest attracted 26 participants who would lose a total of 184.5 lbs between July 8 and November 8.

If you missed out on 2010's Biggest Loser, Craig is gearing up for another round in 2011. This second season is scheduled to begin January 24. Contact Craig Bonney if you would like to join the challenge. You can still participate if you start late.

Shedding the pounds is just one of the ways OEM's employees can stay healthy. Other wellness ideas include walking groups that convene during lunch, lunch groups that prepare healthy meals for group members, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and walking to work instead of driving, if possible. These activities can help keep your heart, immune system, and muscles strong and healthy.

This year, The Sit Rep will highlight new ways to stay healthy in each edition. How do you maintain your health at work? Share your health tips with Lisa Schulman so she can include them in the newsletter.

Are you aware that the topography of Manhattan used to be quite different than it is today? Did you know that hills were flattened and valleys and streams were filled in? New York City's evolving topography was one of many interesting topics addressed at the GIS division's third annual GIS Day on November 19, 2010.

This year GIS Day at OEM honored the upcoming bicentennial of the Commissioner's Plan of 1811, which laid out the street plan for the undeveloped parts of Manhattan. While some changes were never made and others modified over time, this plan from 200 years ago established the grid pattern we are familiar with today. Interestingly, Central Park was noticeably absent from the plan. A true-to-the-original, eight foot replica was on display at GIS Day.

In addition to the plan display, the GIS Division showcased its work in a portfolio of map products, a poster illustrating the work done after the September 16 storms, and a presentation about OEM GIS that ran in the South Conference Room. This GIS Day also marked the first time GIS staff gave presentations about how geographic information is created and consumed.



"Fun with Maps", a trivial pursuit game inspired by OEM's geographic data holdings

Lynn Seirup spoke about the American Community Survey (ACS), an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS replaces the Census Bureau's long form and measures changing social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population. Hassan Adekoya discussed the new features of the enhanced OEM GIS Portal. Critical transportation facilities, Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) and updated evacuation routes are a few of the datasets that were added to the portal.

In addition to the presentations, GIS staff created fun fact flash cards and jigsaw puzzles, including a very challenging one that was a portion of the British Headquarters map. This was a map created to aid in defending

British held Manhattan against George Washington's Continental Army.

Instead of the traditional "Guess the landmark game," this year GIS went bigger and challenged staffers to "Guess the Neighborhood." Director of Watch Command Mike Lee dominated the competition in both the neighborhood knowledge and street smarts quizzes.

GIS Day is a worldwide event that is held during Geography Awareness Week. It started in 1998 as a grassroots effort to allow users to educate the public about GIS and its applications. The GIS Division would like to thank those who participated in this year's event and look forward to seeing everyone at GIS Day 2011.

OEM NEWS

NYC's Quick Cost Savings

City Hall's Quick Cost Savings program, a new initiative to eliminate unnecessary expenses, was recently released to agencies. The program seeks to eliminate practices, like single-side printing and purchasing/printing holiday cards, to save the city a potential \$1.45 million annually, according to City Hall. In addition to the policies addressed in the October memo, the Quick Cost Savings program is evaluating new

initiatives for energy use and eliminating bottled water. Following City Hall's lead, OEM will be adopting its own policies for fiscal prudence, such as revising the agency's overtime policy. Check with your directors for more information.

New Public Transit Plan

On January 31, 2011, the City's Premium TransitChek MetroCards will expire. New York City partnered with Wageworks (getwageworks.com/nyc) to include more transit systems as well as parking near public transit. Visit NYCAPS Employee Self Service to enroll.

NYC Parents Get Notified

In early January, Notify NYC staff teamed up with the Ready New York group to send out nearly 500 Notify NYC packages to parent coordinators at elementary schools in 13 New York City school districts. The promotion incentivizes parent coordinators to encourage parents to sign up for Notify NYC. If parent coordinators get 150 parents to register, they will receive a \$50 Staples gift card. Since the materials were sent, more than 3,000 subscribers signed up for Notify NYC.

OEM Holiday Party 2010

Shake it like a tamborine

