

The Sit Rep



NOVEMBER 2, 2007

Newsletter of the NYC Office of Emergency Management

Penned In: Drilling for Emergencies at Pennsylvania Station



Firefighters stretch a fire hose at a drill in Pennsylvania Station

At 12:01 a.m. on August 26th, a strobe light, acting the part of a fire, pulsed through the dining car of a Washington, D.C., bound train on Pennsylvania Station's track 13. Amtrak security immediately notified first response agencies to the imagined fire, explosion, and injuries. Minutes later a cacophony of sirens eclipsed midtown's Saturday night din as 400 emergency responders converged on Penn Station.

Fortunately for OEM

staff on duty, the chaos was only a test. OEM was hosting the Penn Station full-scale exercise, a drill designed to test the City's response to an explosion in Pennsylvania Station.

"Numerous City agencies collaborated to design this exercise over the last few months," explained Virginia Mewborn, OEM's Director of Training and Exercises. "The array of insights helped us tailor the exercise to test for specific problems during a major response."

Over the next four hours the exercise tested three distinct phases of the City's response. In phase one, firefighters wielding axes and halligans—multi-purpose tools designed to quickly force open many types of locked doors—rushed into the underbelly of Penn Station to extinguish the fire. One group evacuated mock victims while another stretched a fire hose from one of Penn Station's emergency standpipes. In the second phase, police

Editor's Note

So much has happened since the last issue of the Sit Rep that it would be impossible to fit it all in the newsletter. OEM had a busy summer, activating for a steam pipe explosion, two taxi strikes, and even a tornado. Most recently, OEM sent a five-member team to California to help with wild-fire operations. Be sure to look for their stories in the next issue.

This issue features a weapons of mass destruction drill in Penn Station, an extended appendix of new employees, and an account of a CERT training by GIS staffer Dorothy Nash. As always, enjoy the news and applaud the milestones. The office is full of amazing people.

Penned In: Drilling for Emergencies at Pennsylvania Station

investigators entered the blackened dining car and discovered mannequins strewn about haphazardly, their calm expressions in jarring contrast to their twisted and broken limbs. One mannequin, seated in the corner and covered in soot, stood out from the rest. His ripped shirt revealed a wired, tactical vest beneath. He was also missing his arms and head. Responders identified him as the bomber and swept the rest of the car for threats. A second possible bomb discovered moments later forced all personnel to evacuate to a safe distance.

The final phase of the exercise tested the City's fatality management and evidence collection procedures. First responders from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) established a command post and collected samples from each victim to create a database. In a real mass fatality inci-

dent, OCME could identify victims by cross-referencing the DNA samples with more samples contributed by friends and family of missing people.

"A lot of things went right and a few went wrong," explained Jim Kerley, OEM's Exercise Program Manager. "I was pleased to see how quickly the players established a consolidated command post. The missteps taught us to rethink parts of our plans and procedures. If we ran the drill again today, everyone would perform better."

Penn Station's size and busy environment added various complications to the exercise. In addition to managing substantial pedestrian traffic, players had to navigate real-life obstacles like suspicious packages. Due to the overtones of terrorism,



Responders from OCME investigate the scene of the bombing

responders reacted to the packages as if they were in play and relocated the incident command post to a safe distance outside of Penn Station.

In spite of the stop and go nature of the exercise, players established an incident command post, implemented life safety operations, created a multi-agency safety/security zone, and conducted fatality manage-

ment operations faster than expected.

"We set the drill in Penn Station because of the mass transit bombings in London and Madrid," explained Paula Gormish, OEM's inter-agency exercise coordinator. "We knew its size and congestion would present complications, but we wanted to challenge the City's responders with a difficult and realistic environment."

Employee Milestones



Congratulations to Leo and Amy Chiang on the birth of their daughter,
Alexa Tia Chiang
Girl, 5 lbs, 8oz
Born: 9/12/07

Kevin Mulrooney invented and patented a folding metal shield to protect expensive emergency lights and sirens during storms, forest fires, or riots. His invention could save agencies thousands of dollars in replacement expenses.

On November 1, **Jim McConnell** received an award for Excellence in IT Support and Service for guiding his GIS team in outstanding technical support in operations and customer service.

Saturday, October 27, **Paula Gormish** married Billy Carlson. Billy proposed to Paula on stage at a Dark Star Orchestra show in front of 5000 people. They have been dating since 2002 and have spent their vacations working together at a camp for burn victims since they met.



On September 30, **Rachel Stein Dickinson's** team, "Sam's Friends," raised over \$14,000 during the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Walk for a Cure. Over 500,000 people walked in 200 different locations across the country.

On October 6 and 7, **Virginia Mewborn** raised almost \$3,000 for breast cancer research during Avon's two-day, 39-mile Walk for Breast Cancer. Over 3,000 people walked, raising over \$10 million.



On September 26, OEM hosted its Ready New York Partners in Preparedness reception at Gracie Mansion. The reception honored community and private sector partners who help educate New Yorkers about the importance of preparing for emergencies. This year, OEM recognized the New York Mets and the New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) for their outstanding commitment to community prepared-

ness and disaster education. Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon accepted the honor for the New York Mets and Board President Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs accepted on behalf of NYDIS. Over 200 people from 50 organizations attended the event.



Commissioner Bruno poses with Reverend Dr. Martha Jacobs as she accepts her award

In Brief:

On September 10, nine staffers from OEM attended the season premiere of The Oprah Winfrey Show for A Special Tribute to 9/11. They wore their OEM shirts for the cameras and were lucky enough to meet Oprah before the show.

On October 22, OEM headquarters provided a picturesque backdrop for Mayor Bloomberg's progress report on PlaNYC— an initiative to create a “greener, greater” New York City.

On October 27, NBC's “[Open House NYC](#)” featured Amber Greene teaching the host George Oliphant to pack a Go Bag. The segment jumped from OEM's briefing room to a fire station to a home to illustrate the steps New Yorkers should take to prepare for emergencies.

On November 1, OEM's Emergency Operations Center received the City's *Special Recognition Award* as part of the 2007 Excellence in Technology Awards. Henry Jackson accepted.

CERTified: GIS member Dorothy Nash recounts her experience training with CHK-CERT.

I spent last spring in an 11-week training cycle with the Community Emergency Response Team from Manhattan's Community Board 4. It was a terrific experience, especially given the skill level and dedication of our lead instructors, Jim Kerley and Jim Brosi. They taught us that a CERT member's first responsibility is personal safety. They emphasized that we should work at the level of our training to ensure the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Our training covered a broad range of topics from basic firefighting to medical triage. One memorable night, the Jims taught us how to “Pull, Approach, Squeeze, and Sweep” or PASS a fire extinguisher. We spent the evening PASSing white clouds down West 25th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues and disconcerting local commuters. Another

night, the Jims taught us to pressure-bandage wounds. My partner for the exercise, who had done a fair amount of plumbing and electrical work, quickly managed to cut off most of the blood to my right hand. I have no doubt he could have saved my life in the aftermath of a motor vehicle accident or mass casualty incident— the scenarios for which we trained.

The police science session on directing traffic was particularly challenging. “You never want to step backwards when cars, trucks, and taxis coming at you from all directions,” the instructors explained. I also learned to always be aware of my surroundings and identify the exits at the onset of an incident. Perhaps most importantly, I learned that the tricky third rail that powers the subway changes position throughout the lines.

Though it may be on one side of the tracks at West 25th, there is no guarantee it will be on the same side at Columbus Circle. That's why it's so important to observe your surroundings every time you arrive at an incident.

I came away with a strong sense of commitment to the Chelsea-Hell's Kitchen (CHK) CERT. We have a toehold below 34th Street, but establishing a presence in the Hell's Kitchen area west of 8th Avenue up to 59th

Street will be our first challenge. We need to build relationships with public safety personnel across several police precincts and firehouses. This will require a lot of activity, from street fairs to block association meetings. We got our feet wet with National Night Out and a couple of early morning “on calls” during the first taxi disruption, and we feel up to the challenge. For more information on CERT, visit [NYC.gov/cert](#).



CERT member practices PASSing with a fire extinguisher

New Faces That Grace Us



Jennifer Adger joins OEM as a Continuity of Operations Planner. She worked in the Bureau of Emergency Management at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she facilitated agency-wide planning. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Auburn University, and a master's in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Jennifer is a doctoral candidate in criminology at American University.



Brittney Allen joins OEM as a Watch Commander.



Nafeesah Allen returns to OEM as a Citizen Corps Community Associate. She worked in a similar capacity, as a NYC Urban Fellow,

until May of this year, when she left to spend the summer working in the political and economic sections of the U.S. Embassy in Cape Verde, West Africa. Nafeesah received a bachelor's degree from Barnard College, Columbia University, and is working on a master's in international affairs at Columbia's School of International and Foreign Affairs.

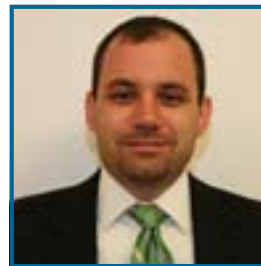


William Anderson joins OEM as a Human Services Facilities Specialist. He has worked at OEM as both a GIS intern and consultant on the Post-Disaster Provisional Housing Competition. William worked as a statistical analyst for the NYU Metro Center for Urban Education and as a network technician for a Broadband over Powerline Internet firm. He holds a bachelor's degree in metropolitan studies from New York University and will pursue a master's in urban planning at Hunter College.



Marc Barbieri joins OEM as

a Watch Command Supervisor. Marc spent four years at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, most recently as the Acting Director of Exercises and Training in the Bureau of Emergency Management. Marc spent almost 15 years as a Lieutenant in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) with the Fire Department and an instructor at the EMS Academy. Marc has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Queens College and a master's in public health from Hunter College.



David Blitzer joins OEM as a Plan Manager. Before OEM, he investigated contaminated properties to convert them into residential and commercial units for NYC Environmental Management and Consulting firm Fleming-Lee Shue, Inc. David is certified as a firefighter and EMT. He holds a bachelor's degree in geosciences from the University of Rhode Island.



Justin Brown joins OEM as a Citywide Interagency Coor-

inator. He worked as a firefighter-paramedic for the Washington, D.C., Fire and EMS. Justin has a bachelor's degree in health sciences from The George Washington University and is currently working on a master's in critical infrastructure.



Manuel Chea joins OEM as a Continuity of Operations Planner. After 9/11 he helped implement his company's Disaster Recovery Plan and kept its critical business functions in operation. Manuel also worked to enhance the Emergency Preparedness Plan for the Incorporated Village of Amityville on Long Island. Manuel has a master's degree in emergency and disaster management from Metropolitan College of New York.



Kevin Darcy joins OEM as a Citywide Interagency Coordinator. He is a Lieutenant with the Fire Department. He has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Queens College.

New Faces That Grace Us



Didier Dorga joins OEM as a Watch Commander. He worked as an EMT for Transcare Ambulance and Jones Beach State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in education from Florida International University, and a master's in emergency and disaster management from Metropolitan College of New York.



Kimberly Fallon joins OEM as a Citywide Interagency Coordinator. She is a captain in the Maryland Air National Guard where she is the Wing Readiness/Emergency Management Flight Officer. Kimberly graduated from Princeton University with bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering in 2002.



Joseph Fasanella joins OEM as a Watch Commander from the Police Department



Erich Giebelhaus joins OEM as the Department of Health liaison. He developed and managed emergency preparedness projects for hospitals and primary care centers for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for the last three years. Erich has a bachelor's degree in history and German from Grinnell College and a master's in public policy from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.



Brendan Gillen joins OEM as a Citywide Interagency Coordinator from the Fire Department.



Alex Henry joins OEM as a Continuity of Operations Planning Urban Fellow. He has worked with a range of elected officials from

members of Congress to City Council members. Alex spent last summer in Cairo working for a Carnegie Scholar Raymond Baker, who was writing a book about a moderate political Islamist movement. He studied philosophy and public policy at Trinity College in Hartford.



Emily Levy joins OEM as a GIS Specialist. She will work on the Critical Infrastructure GIS Data Sets project. Her main emphasis will be analyzing and transforming subway station drawings into GIS-formatted data sets for use by incident commanders during emergencies. Emily is a recent graduate of the professional degree program in architecture at Pratt Institute.



John Logan joins OEM as a Coastal Storm Logistics Coordinator. After 20 years with the Police Department, he retired in July 2006 as a Sergeant. He is now employed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. John has a

bachelor's degree from St. John's University and a master's degree from Marist College.



Steve Mariconda joins OEM as a Continuity of Operations Planner. He created and implemented business continuity and emergency management initiatives for the IDT Corporation, a multinational company that includes telecom, energy, and finance. Steve has a bachelor's degree from Lehigh University and an MBA in Finance from New York University.



Anthony Marzuillo joins OEM as a Continuity of Operations Planner. He worked in information technology for nearly 32 years with Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield. Anthony has an associate degree in science from St. John's University.

New Faces That Grace Us



Erin McLachlan joins OEM as a Human Services Planning Specialist. She worked with Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) as the National Deployment Manager and the NYC liaison. Erin lived in Guatemala for three years and started a women's poverty lending bank. Erin holds a master's in International Affairs from the New School. She invites you to join her NYC disaster book club.



Mary Merced joins OEM as a Watch Commander after 15 years with the Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services. She has her associate's degree with credits toward a bachelor's degree in social work. She is a certified lab instructor, Haz-Tac Tech, WMD Tech, as well as a CPR Instructor.



Michael Ortiz joins OEM as

a Watch Command Supervisor. He has over nine years of experience as a Project Coordinator and a Project Director at Hunter College-CUNY. He served a combat tour in Iraq in 2005 and continues to serve in the New York Army National Guard as an Executive and Operations Officer.



Rashada Outlaw joins OEM as a Public Health Planner. She's worked in long-term care, clinical trials, and laboratory hospital administration for over 10 years. She also worked as Supervisor of Genzyme Genetics Oncology and Prenatal Division. She has a bachelor's degree in biology from Temple University and a master's in public administration from Long Island University.



Alfred Pabon, joins OEM as a Watch Commander after 17 years with the Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services. He spent

the last 10 years assigned to a Haz-Tac unit in the South Bronx. Alfred is an Auxiliary Police Officer with the 52nd Police precinct in the Bronx. He holds a GMRS radio license.



Alex Rabb joins OEM as the Special Needs Outreach Coordinator. Alex practiced law as a legal services attorney with a focus on disability-related cases. He also oversaw election law operations and worked on multiple local, citywide, and statewide political campaigns as Legal Coordinator for the New York State Working Families Party. Alex has a bachelor's in religion from Oberlin College and a law degree from Harvard Law School.



Darlyn Ramos joins OEM as a CERT Intern. He is currently a senior at John Jay College of criminal justice, studying criminal justice and Latin American studies. Darlyn has also worked with the New York City Police Department Cadet Corps, as well as the United States Marshals Service as a student.



Randy Ranuro joins OEM as a logistics planner. He has nine years of logistics experience in operations planning, high-value cargo transportation, warehousing, and import/export operations. He has a bachelor's degree in logistics from St. John's University.



Heather Roiter joins OEM as a Recovery and Mitigation Planner. She has worked in quality assurance, database management, and statistical analysis. Last year she interned at the NYC Housing Authority in communications. Heather has a bachelor's degree in demography from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's in urban planning from Columbia University.



Jill Samonte joins OEM as a CERT Development

New Faces That Grace Us

Specialist. She spent the last 13 years as a trauma psychotherapist working with victims of crime in community mental health agencies, not-for-profits, and a suburban police department. She is certified in Critical Incident Stress Management and is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in Illinois. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and a master's in counseling Psychology from Benedictine University. She is pursuing a master's in emergency and disaster management from Metropolitan College of New York.



Brian Silva joins OEM as a Watch Commander. Brian Silva is a former teacher, trainer and EMT from California. He is pursuing his master's in emergency and disaster management at Metropolitan College of New York. He is the President of the International Association of Emergency Managers chapter at the college and in November, will become the President of the association's Student Region. Silva is also a volunteer trainer and responder with the American Red Cross of Greater New York.



Joann Spreen joins OEM's Training and Exercises team from the Police Department.



Bryan Stern joins OEM as a Watch Command Supervisor. He has extensive experience with counter-Terrorism, counterintelligence, and human intelligence issues in the Middle East and Africa with the United States Army and the US Intelligence Community. Bryan was assigned to New York City with Army Intelligence at 6 World Trade Center prior to and during the events of September 11th, 2001. Bryan earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Bryan is a certified instructor by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.



Rachel Sulaymanov joins OEM as a Continuity of

Operations Planner. She has also worked as a contractor for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and as a Staff Assistant in the legislative offices of Congressman Jerry Nadler. Rachel was a Peace Corps volunteer in Uzbekistan, specializing in health education for women and children. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Montclair State University and a master's in non-profit management from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service.



Robert Van Pelt joins OEM as a Human Services Sheltering Specialist. He worked as the managing attorney in charge of family intake issues at the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). He managed a staff of legal and administrative personnel responsible for improving intake policies and procedures and ensuring they were correctly applied at each site. Robert has a law degree from the CUNY School of Law.



Calder Yates joins OEM as an Interfaith Outreach Coordinator. He will be organizing culturally sensitive readiness messaging along with carrying out city-wide interfaith Preparedness Summits. He has a bachelor's degree in art and political science from New College of Florida in Sarasota. His thesis involved a visual arts exhibition about identity within bureaucratic and organizational structures.



Peter Zotter joins OEM as a Public/Private Initiatives Coordinator. He has 17 years' experience with the Police Department.



Maurice Zuniga joins OEM as a Watch Commander after 26 years with the Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services. He graduated from the New York City Technical College.