



# The ALERTER



## Coming Up

16 May

### Monthly Training

6:00, Gilford Public Library. A Communications Workshop led by Dick Christopher and Jim White promises to be both informative and fun. Bring your own FRS radio or use one of LR CERT's. Upon completion, CERT radios will be assigned to members who need one.

9 June

### NH Integrated Emergency Volunteer Training Conference

At the Raddison Hotel, Manchester. Registration now open.

### Preparedness Tips

Shiela Vermacy notes that the social networking site LinkedIn has a group devoted to CERT in the US. There is active discussion from CERTs around the country. Membership in LinkedIn is free.

Also, here's a website with tips from a Katrina survivor. See especially the comments on document preservation!

<<http://www.theplacewithnname.com/blogs/klessons/p/0008.html>>



## April Training

### Traffic Control — by David Stamps

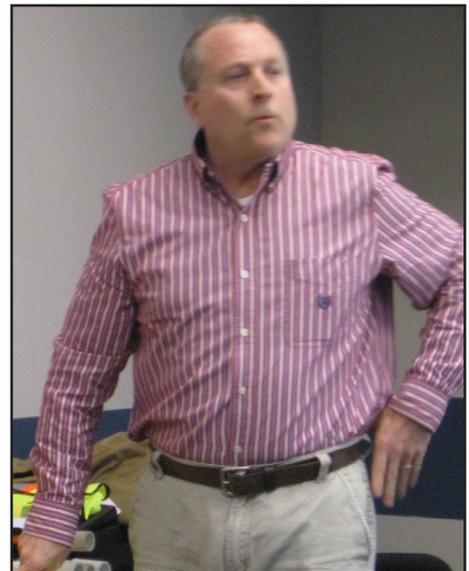


Traffic control is the single most common deployment for LR CERT. This was driven home by our callout for the 3-alarm fire on High Street in Laconia. We were also reminded of the February deployment, when the temperature dropped to 4 degrees by the end of our second shift.

As such, we take traffic training very seriously. Our most recent training was on April 18th, at the Laconia Police Community Room, conducted by Ron O'Keefe, from Local Government Center (LGC).

Ron started off by saying how important the work of CERT is to the first responders. In effect, they are human force multipliers, allowing police and fire to concentrate on their primary jobs. LGC has developed a custom program for traffic training for CERT.

With both a Powerpoint and samples of safety equipment, Ron brought home the realities and hazards of traffic duty. He supported the CERT



Photos: Gerie Pingol

approach of having two-person traffic control teams in most situations. He did caution that it is important not to confuse drivers by both doing the primary signaling. The second team member can support by watching the other approaches, doing radio communications, and providing directions.

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### LR CERT Callout

## High Street Fire

On Tuesday 17 April, a fire broke out at a 10-unit apartment house on High Street, Laconia, near the Lakes Region General Hospital's Emergency Department. Fire Departments from several nearby communities responded to what became a 3-alarm fire. All of the building's occupants escaped unharmed.

At 8:55 PM, LR CERT Coordinator Kathleen Merriam was contacted by the Laconia Police Department and asked to provide traffic control. Sally Porter, dispatcher, was able to reach Mary Lou Anderson, Dick Christopher, Jennifer Muzzey, David Stamps, and Mike Wheeler, who joined Kathleen to cordon off the fire scene.

### First Person Report by David Stamps

The call came to me at 9:03 PM. "We've been activated," said Kathleen. There's a 3-alarm fire on High Street next

to the Hospital! Sally's working on a call-up for at least four people. Meet Sgt. Simmons at Highland and High Streets."

Checking my Google Maps to be sure we both knew where I needed to go I said OK. "I'll be on-site in 15 minutes. I will check in with you then."

Oddly, this was good timing, as I had just come in from a program at the Laconia Middle School. Since my wife and I walked the mile-plus back, a call half an hour earlier would have left me up the creek without a paddle.

As it was, I already knew the outdoor weather but I glanced at the NOAA forecast to get an idea of the temperature slide as evening wore on so I would know how many layers to wear and bring. Even though the temps were supposed to stay in the 50s, I threw in gloves and a parka just in case. A few hours on the pavement in the wind can suck the warmth right out of you.

Arriving on scene, I saw Sgt. Simmons,



Photos: Kathleen Merriam

checked in, and told him how many we were expecting. I asked him where he wanted us. As the fire was half-way between Union and Highland, our goal, he said, was to relieve the two officers and stop traffic from both directions on High Street.

I immediately relieved Sgt. Simmons and told him I would dispatch two team members to arrive from the other side and relieve the officer there.

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## CERT Profile

Jack & Carmen Bishop — by Richard Dow



No strangers to volunteering, Jack and Carmen Bishop joined the American Red Cross following Hurricane Katrina. They trained and worked in disaster assessment resulting from fires before learning about CERT.

“We were in the second basic training class,” Jack recalls. It was the first one to use the current format of nine evenings instead of two eight-hour sessions, and many of the classes were held at the Taylor Community.

Jack is a native of Southborough, Massachusetts, and a 38-year veteran of Ford Motor Company, where he worked in a variety of positions including sales, promotions, and special projects. He had been with Ford for several years when he realized that, with the Vietnam War intensifying, he would probably be drafted. He joined the Naval Reserve and did his active duty as a Communications Technician at an Air Force base in Germany that was run by the Army!

Carmen was born and raised in La Belle Province — Quebec. She worked as an executive secretary and raised two children, a son and a daughter, who both live in New Hampshire now. The couple met through a mutual friend and spent a number of years in Southborough before moving to their current Moultonborough home when they retired in 2000.

The Bishops enjoy snowmobiling in the winter and groom trails for the Moultonboro Snowmobile Club. In summer, it's water sports, especially boating and jet skiing.

Their major love, though, is travelling. While they have visited Hawaii and did a tour of Europe (“It was one of those ‘It’s Tuesday so this must be Belgium’ kind,” Carmen remembers), they really enjoy road trips. They have driven extensively through northwest Canada and Alaska as well as taking many meandering trips up and down the Atlantic seaboard. “Jack has a good sense of direction,” says Carmen. “The only time he got us lost was on a mountain in North Carolina, but we managed to find our way back.”

The Bishops’ skills, spirit, and love of adventure make them valuable assets for LR CERT.

### Gear Review — Dick Dow

#### LifeHammer

An inexpensive and potentially vital piece of equipment for your vehicle is the Life-Hammer. It features a double-sided head with hardened steel points to shatter vehicle windows and a protected blade for cutting through seat belt straps.



It comes with a mounting bracket that can be located in a convenient and accessible place. A fluorescent button lets you find it in the dark.

Amazon has these in stock for \$14.95.

**Training — Continued from Page 1**

Ron reviewed our Traffic Operating Guidelines and felt they were comprehensive. He agreed with our mandatory use of Class II vests saying that today they are required by law as well as common sense. He demonstrated the use of the STOP/SLOW signs and when to use them. He also illustrated other traffic control scenarios and demonstrated use of the LED wands.

All in all it was a good training for our new team members and a valuable refresher for our more experienced veterans. The training was very well attended, and we are very grateful for the time and excellent program by Mr. O'Keefe.

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Just then Kathleen called, explaining she was on the way in and that Sally had activated five people — four for traffic control and one for safety officer.

As it turned out, we needed all six of us. I asked Kathleen to call two of the team members and have them go directly to the other traffic control point. Each group was equipped with an FRS radio so it was easy to keep in contact.

All of these conversations were back-dropped by all the fire, police, and EMS equipment. With a 15 to 20 MPH wind, the fire had caught hold quickly. A dozen apartment residents,

a crowded neighborhood, and LRGH next door meant there was a full-court press to knock down the fire as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, with the CERTMobile out of commission, we were unable to perform rehab with the supplies we normally have available. We did send a team over to the Lakeport fire house and brought back water for the firefighters.

By 11:30 PM the fire was under control and most of the trucks left. Finally, Deputy Pendergast relieved the team, whereupon we went to Dunkin Donuts to do a quick hot-wash [preliminary after action review].

**The ALERTER / LR CERT**

Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health, Inc.  
67 Water Street, Suite 105  
Laconia, NH 03246