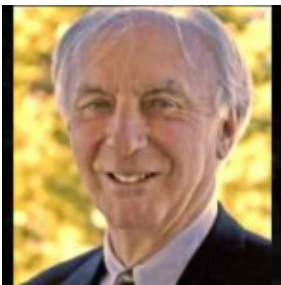


EDSO involves more than patrolling the streets

By Ted Long

This week we learned about two unlikely connected subjects, Hostage-Crisis Negotiations and the Emergency Services Department. The hostage presentation was by Detective Sean Fitzgerald. Like those before him, he was personable and likable, although he tried a little too hard, in my opinion, to be funny.

Many of us had hoped to hear some real life stories, like TV where the hostage negotiator, after hours of talk, brings out the suspect and all ends well. Instead, we heard mostly about some fundamental rules in hostage negotiation. Things like don't promise anything, seal off the communication so the suspect only can talk to the negotiator, no jokes and be sure your mic is off or the phone is on hold before you start to talk with your fellow officers.



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Hostage-crisis negotiation is not an exact science, however, the fundamentals are carefully observed. The basic idea is to relate to the suspect, not to agree. To encourage a positive conclusion without specific promises, to let the suspect know, clearly, that the issue is limited to his surrender without directly saying so. Our instructor admitted he actually cried with a female suspect in sympathy for her

dilemma.

Deputy Matt Cathey – again, another long-term deputy with about 20 years of service, led the second part of the evening. We were told about the OES center and how it operates. For me, the stories from the Angora Fire were most interesting. The OES has a center at the county office complex in Placerville and can be set up in an hour or two. When operating all the activity of fire, rescue, police and the various local, state and federal operations are directed from their. Evacuation planning and the actual evacuation is a prime function of the office. The county has a new service that will automatically give you an evacuation notice call. If you have a conventional landline, you are already connected, but to get your cell phone connected you need to go to the website or call (530) 621.4911.

An area of concern that I had not thought about was the possibility of floods in the Sacramento Delta. The area is rated as the second most dangerous after New Orleans and the possibility of a tidal wave on Lake Tahoe in the case of an earthquake. The OES has already worked out an evacuation plan for those two possibilities. Another task of the OES is to work with the various departments to deal with workplace violence, which can be a serious issue. Their role is to review and advise.

Also, Cathey coordinates the massive, more than 160-member search and rescue program. As a part of the presentation of the this voluntary program and the commitment on the part of the volunteers he gave great promo for CalStar, which every mountain resident should be a member of, the cost of a helicopter evacuation can run in to the tens of thousands and as a CalStar member it will cost you little.

Next week we visit the evidence room and begin preparation for our “traffic stops” exercise.

Ted Long is a South Lake Tahoe resident participating in the El Dorado County Sheriff's Citizens Academy.