

Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association February 2018 Newsletter

President`s Message



PMKCA President Joe Clarkson

Aloha PMKCA Neighbors

Personal Safety in a Nuclear Attack

I was not in Hawaii when the (false) alarm text was sent out by the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, so I was lucky not to have to go through the terror and confusion caused by the false alarm. For many people, exposure to the mistaken alarm may have been the first time they thought about nuclear war in many years.

Most people I know donâ€™t really think much about the actual consequences of a nuclear attack except to rapidly come to the conclusion that should such a thing really happen, their life will be instantly snuffed out. If that kind of all-or-nothing consequence were really true, then we would be justified in thinking that there is not much to be done in the way of responding to an actual attack other than good-bye kisses. In reality, there is much one can do to increase the odds of survival.

I am old enough to remember when the prospect of nuclear war was something that every level of government took seriously. As school kids we had âœduck and coverâ€ drills at school in addition to the usual fire drills. In the 1950s nuclear war was something to be prepared for. But nuclear attack drills, bomb and fallout shelters (both public and private) and public education about personal response to a nuclear attack have long ago gone out of fashion. It may be that preparations for emergency response to nuclear attack have been seen by the federal government and other public agencies as a provocation to other nuclear powers and are thereby likely to raise the risk of nuclear war. Perhaps they see the civilian population as sacrificial lambs on the altar

of deterrence.

Although our government may not do much in the way of public education about individual defensive action in a nuclear attack, there is actually much that one can do to increase the odds of surviving one. One of the most important things to know is the reason for all those duck-and-cover drills taught to school kids over sixty years ago; more people will be killed or maimed by flying debris than will be harmed by the heat and other direct radiation from the explosion itself. Even more will be killed by exposure to the fallout that rains down on the surrounding area after the blast. Both flying debris and nuclear fallout dangers can be significantly reduced with the proper response.

Within only seconds after a nuclear explosion, a supersonic shock wave of atmospheric over-pressure will travel for miles across the landscape surrounding the epicenter of the blast. People will have just seconds after the incredible brightness of the explosion to avoid being hit by flying debris from the atmospheric shockwave. Many buildings will be destroyed. Even more will remain standing, but have all their windows blown out. One's first response after seeing the flash from the initial explosion should be to fall to the floor or ground and cover one's ears with a thumb from each hand and cover the eyes with the palms and fingers. Don't get up until several minutes have passed or until the shockwave has come and gone. This immediate reaction is crucial to avoid being shredded by flying glass shards and other debris.

It is far beyond the scope of this article to cover the appropriate response to radioactive fallout. I highly recommend that people read an excellent overview of individual response activity after a nuclear attack at <http://www.goodnewsnuke.com/> Don't be deterred by the title of the overview, which is "The Good News About Nuclear Destruction."

I know that the issue of nuclear war is much bigger than the topics usually covered in this column, but should one ever occur, we will all be affected in ways both large and small. The "good news" is that we can do a lot to minimize those effects if we just take the time to learn about them and prepare for them.

Annual PMKCA Membership Meeting

Our Annual Membership Meeting was held at Pa'auilo School on Tuesday, January 30th. We will publish a report on that meeting in the next monthly newsletter.

Best Regards,

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President, PMKCA

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