

Grays Harbor County Emergency Management

Preparedness on the Harbor

Moclips

Volume 4, Issue 2

March - April 2018

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MOMENTS OF MISFORTUNE - Part 2

By Chuck Wallace
Edited by Lisa Ballou

This is Part 2 of a 6 part story appearing in the Grays Harbor County Preparedness on the Harbor Newsletter through the November/December 2018 edition.

Parts 1 and 2 can be found at:

<http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/Emergency%20Management/Story/Moments%20of%20Misfortune%20Part%201.pdf>

Part 2

My knees buckle at the news my daughter is trapped at the school. I'm not absolutely sure I correctly heard what my wife just told me. I feel as if I'm going to become physically ill.

After what seems like an eternity, I'm able to swallow the lump in my throat and ask for clarity, "Tell me again Shar, what happened?"

My wife once again blurts out "Katie is trapped inside of the school, it collapsed! The school called and told me and ..."

I become oblivious to everything else she is saying. My entire soul is on the verge of panic. I don't know how to respond to my wife. I'm having trouble thinking straight. My mind begins whirring; oh my god...oh my god.... The news is crushing. My heart is beating so fast and hard, I can hear the blood pulsing through my veins. I feel as if I'm going to pass out, as I drop to one knee in the puddled parking lot.

Matt, reaches out and grabs my arm, steadying me. "Are you ok? Are you alright Jack?"

I struggle to look up. I nearly drop my phone as I cling to Matt's arm and leg. I'm barely able to nod my head.

I can hear my wife shouting, almost pleading for me to begin conversing again, "Jack, are you there? Jack? Jack?"

Matt helps me to my feet and guides me past two other cars. "Here, sit in my car, get out of the rain."

Finally I'm able to put together a coherent thought and ask, "Shar, can you get to the school? I have to figure out how to get there."

She responds, "Where is your car?"

I tell her, "My car keys are on my desk in my office. We had to leave the building because of structural damage and I can't get back in."



My wife begins to sob, "I thought you'd pick me up and we'd go together. I don't want to go alone."

"Shar, I can't use my car. I'll try to get a ride to the school with someone and meet you there."

Matt overhears the conversation and offers, "I can take you wherever you need to go, Jack."

I look at Matt through the tears in my eyes and nod.

I tell Shar, "It'll be alright. Just get to the school. I'll meet you at the entrance."

Hesitantly, and still sobbing, she agrees.

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The drive to the school is taking forever. Some streets are blocked and Matt is doing his best to navigate secondary routes. It's all I can do to maintain my composure while I sit in silence.

During the ride, my oldest daughter, Janie, texts my wife and I, *That was crazy! R U guys OK?*

Shar texts back, *Thank God U R ok. We're good.*

Janie texts, *I'm at a friend's home. They closed the office. She lives around the corner. I'm helping her clean up.*

Adding, *The earthquake knocked me down and I broke the heel on my boot, tore the knees out of my pants, broke 2 fingernails and I think I lost my lipstick!*

She continues, *On top of all that, my mascara isn't waterproof and now I have black streaks around my eyes and down my face.*

I smile and chuckle; her message taking me away from this frightening moment.

"You really scared me to death out there," Matt offered, trying to work up a conversation to keep me from thinking about my daughter. "I thought you were having a heart attack. Are you sure you're ok?"

I shake my head and reply, "I'm ok."

My wife returns Janie's text, *Janie, I just tried to call you, but the phones are still busy. Katie has been involved in an accident at her school.*

Texting more, *Dad and I are heading there now. We will let you know more when we do.*

Janie texts, *WHAT? What's wrong, Is she hurt?*

Shar replies, *We'll let you know more when we do.*

Matt, showing great concern for the situation, reaches over, puts his hand on my shoulder, squeezes it and says, "Don't worry buddy, it'll be ok. We'll be there soon."

Not really listening, I grunt a few times to appear I'm paying attention to him, but can't keep my mind off Katie. She must be terrified buried under the building. I feel helpless.

Matt states, "We're here, but it looks like they're restricting access to the school."

I don't hear a word he is saying.

After a few seconds he declares, louder this time, "Jack, we're here. We're at the school."

Matt parks the car along the side of the road. There is gridlock at the school entrance. I am entrenched in my thoughts about my daughter. Panic catches me again, at the sight of the flashing lights of police and fire vehicles.

"Please let her be safe," I mumble as I weakly step from the car.

Matt immediately joins me carrying an umbrella, protecting us both from the rain. He offers, "I'll go with you. I'm here for you, buddy."

After a few steps, I see my wife attempting to get through the barricaded parking entrance to the school. An officer is talking to her, but I'm still too far away to hear. She's soaking wet, and I see the puffiness of her eyes, from crying, along with expressions of fear and disbelief.

I walk up behind her and put my hand on her shoulder. In fear and frustration, she jerks away yelling, "Don't you touch me!" Glancing around, she recognizes me and hugs me tight.

"They won't let me in, Jack! They won't let me see my own daughter," she exclaims loudly so all nearby can hear.

I plead with the officer, "The school called us, and said our daughter is trapped in the school. Please let us enter."

The officer looks at me and explains, "Everyone needs an escort. All families need an escort to a specific location." He further exclaimed, "I've radioed for someone to come and escort your wife. They will be here soon."

Someone saying they're from a news outlet overhears our conversation and asks for an interview.

I softly reply, "I'm sorry, not right now."

The newsman continues to ask, "Who are you? It will only take a few seconds."

Continuing to hound us, he holds out his cell phone and holds it in front of my wife's face asking more questions.

I get extremely angry and shout, "LEAVE US ALONE! What's wrong with you? We want to be left alone. What's wrong with you people?"

The police officer at the entrance beckons us to step inside the barricade. "Please just stay here until your escort arrives. They can't bother you in here."

We thank him for his compassion. Holding hands, we start into the entrance.

Matt hands me his umbrella and says, "I have my poncho. You guys need this more than I do. Take care of your family."

I take the umbrella, look over my shoulder and say, "Thanks for everything, Matt."

He gives sort of a half salute and waves goodbye.

Waiting silently, holding each other close, we await our escort. I feel Shar sobbing, as she pulls me tighter. I pull her to my chest, under the umbrella, comforting her as I attempt to keep us both dry. She's softly praying to herself.

A few minutes later, a young woman approaches and speaks to the officer. He points to us and she makes her way toward us.

She asks, "Are you Mr. and Mrs. McFadden? You're Katie's parents?" As we nod, she introduces herself, "I'm Susan Griffin, a nurse with Public Health. I have wonderful news, Katie has been found and she seems to be fine. I'm going to take you to see her. Right now she's being checked out by the paramedics."

My wife and I both break down, crying, hugging and thanking Susan. She smiles and says, "Let's get you both to where she is."

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We're led to a modular school unit far away from the affected school building. Stepping inside, I look around and see our daughter sitting up on an ambulance stretcher. She has a slight smile on her face, but I can tell she has been crying.

I quickly move to her and hug her tightly, "I'm glad you're safe, baby."

Katie breaks down, "Oh, Daddy!"

Shar approaches from the other side of the stretcher, hugs Katie and whispers, "I was so afraid. Are you alright?"

Looking around at the paramedics and others in the room she asks, "Is she alright?"

Not giving anyone a chance to answer, Shar turns back to Katie, "You're alright, right? You're not injured?"

One of the paramedics reveals, "She seems to be ok, other than a few cuts and bruises. I would suggest getting her a Tetanus shot soon, if she hasn't had one recently. Your daughter told us she hid under a table during the earthquake. Everything collapsed over and around the table. Another girl was with her. Neither were hurt. The table protected them. They were just trapped where they were. Firefighters and a few construction workers helped to get the girls out."

My wife says to Katie, "I prayed they would find you. Thank God you're alright."

Another paramedic offers, "We can transport to the hospital for an observation by a doctor if you'd like. The decision is up to you."

I ask Katie, "Do you want to go to the hospital? Do you hurt anywhere?"

She replies, "I just want to go home, daddy, I don't want to be here anymore."

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Maneuvering away from the news media and the crowd of people attempting to get a glimpse of something, we arrive at my wife's car and begin our journey back home. As I drive, I can feel my stress level drop significantly. It's amazing how different I feel now that Katie is safe.

My wife begins questioning Katie about the earthquake, what happened in the room and how did the girls know to get under a table?

Katie doesn't want to talk about it, but my wife won't stop probing Katie with questions.

Suddenly, Katie yells, "It really scared me, mom!" Then lowering her tone, "The building started shaking and making noises. Sara, the other girl who was trapped with me, told me to get under the table in the room. I closed my eyes as hard as I could, wishing the noise and shaking to stop. The next thing I knew, everything started falling... I don't ever want to go through that again! I'm never going back to the school again, either."

Shar responds, reaching for her hand, "I'm sorry, honey. You don't have to talk about it anymore. Just sit back and relax. We'll be home soon."

As I continue driving, I notice a few homes have chimney damage along various streets.

I ask my Shar, "How did the house hold up to the earthquake?"

She says, "Some of the book shelves fell and the spices from the kitchen cabinet are all over the floor. I was so worried, I didn't finish cleaning everything."

Chuckling, she tells me how our dog, Kailani, ran under the kitchen table to hide. I think Kailani knew the earthquake was coming, because she ran under the table before the shaking began.

Then in an alarmed tone she states, "Oh No! Your dog is probably eating the spices! I didn't get the chance to clean them up. She'll get sick."

I jokingly respond, "She'll be sorry if she gets into the chili flakes."

Looking into the rear view mirror, I'm relieved to see Katie dozing off to sleep. My wife finally gets a phone call through to our daughter Janie, explaining what happened and that we're all fine and are heading home.

Suddenly Katie starts shouting, "MAKE IT STOP." She begins thrashing around in the back seat, straining against her seat belt.

I nearly drive off the road as her yelling practically scares me to death.

I shout, "What the..?"

Shar shouts, "What's the matter? What's the matter?"

Realizing Katie has had a nightmare about her ordeal, I pull over. Shar gets in the backseat with Katie, holds her and strokes her hair, calming her. She stays in the back seat, comforting Katie the rest of the way home.

"Well, the damage wasn't too bad here, and the dog seems to be fine," I state later that evening, as we finish cleaning up. Katie is asleep on the couch.

I add, "There are a few areas I may need to patch on the walls, but it's not too bad."

Out of the blue, my wife declares, "Jack, I want to move."

Dumbfounded, I ask, "What are you talking about?"

"Jack. I want to move. I'm serious. It's too dangerous here. Our daughter isn't even safe at school. Our home is broken. I'm scared. She's scared. Did you know I had to sit in the bathroom while she showered because she was afraid to be alone?"

I stare at my wife, trying to understand exactly what she's saying.

She continues, "I don't feel safe. We're not safe. I want to move."

I reply, "Shar, it's over. Yes, we had two small earthquakes, but we've been here for 10 years and never had anything like this before. It's just happenstance."

She cuts me off, "No Jack. I'm serious! I want to move. Our daughter almost lost her life!"

Raising my voice in a flustered tone, "So where are you gonna go?"

She responds, "I don't know. I just want to move."

I assert, "Shar, no matter where you go, there is always something that could happen. You just need to be prepared and understand what the issues are and get ready."

She demeaningly fires back, "That's great to hear, Jack. We're not prepared for anything."

I respond, "Then, we'll get ready and start preparing."

More demeaning than before, "Yeah, right. I asked about that preparedness business before, and did it happen? No. You're just trying to buy time, hoping this blows over."

Just as Shar begins to storm out of the den towards the dining room, the dog bolts upstairs ahead of a loud rumble that echoes throughout the house. Our home begins to shake and jerk. Everything goes dark as the lights go out. The motion knocks my wife to the floor near the dining room table, tosses me out of my chair, and flips the couch on top of Katie. The noise increasingly intensifies until it's almost deafening. Glass is breaking everywhere, the walls are creaking and Katie is screaming at the top of her lungs from under the couch.

I yell out, "Katie, stay where you are! Shar, hold on to the table leg and stay there!"

It's pitch black. I try to crawl to the table Shar is hiding under, but the jerking of the house keeps pushing me in different directions. I cover my head with one arm as some sheetrock from the ceiling falls onto my back.

Katie is screaming, "MAKE IT STOP...OH GOD...STOOOOOOOP!"

Shar is crying out "Katie, stay where you are...stay where you are! Jack? Jack?"

I puncture my hand on a nail that fell onto the floor, cursing as I crawl over broken glass, cutting the palms of my hands. As I finally make my way under the table with my wife, I feel the warmth of blood seeping around my knee. This is really, really bad! My eyes are darting all around the room trying to see what is happening.

Katie screams, "DADDY? DADDY? WHERE ARE YOU? HELP ME. MAKE IT STOP!"

I yell across to her, "Just stay still baby. Stay where you are. I'm here. It'll be over soon."

But it seems to last forever. The noise is getting louder. My home appears to be disintegrating as it jerks left, then right. Everywhere, I hear objects crashing onto the floor, walls and wood creaking, and glass is breaking. Katie begins to scream hysterically, and Shar sobbing, has a death grip on the center post of the table. I'm scared to death.



## Daylight Saving Time Begins March 11th

Grays Harbor County Emergency Management would like to remind you to check the operation of your smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, flashlights and All Hazard Alert Weather Radios.

*Don't forget  
to replace the batteries!*



# 2018

NATIONAL SEASONAL  
PREPAREDNESS  
MESSAGING CALENDAR

[ready.gov/calendar](http://ready.gov/calendar)

**LOOK** what you can find  
on the  
Grays Harbor County  
Emergency Management  
Website

### PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION

- Emergency Notification
- Are You Prepared?
- Flooding
- Hazardous Materials
- Earthquakes
- Tsunami
- Winter Weather Tips



### WARNING

- Danger!
- Run to higher ground.
- Follow emergency instructions.

### ADVISORY

- Possible strong and dangerous currents.
- Be prepared to take action.
- Stay off the beach.

### WATCH

- Potential danger.
- Be alert, listen to your radio.

### INFORMATION STATEMENT

- For information only,  
no tsunami generated.

<https://tsunami.gov/>

## WASHINGTON STATE BEACH SAFETY Clam Digging

Clam Digging is a great way to enjoy local beaches with your family. Be extremely aware of weather conditions, surf conditions and periods of darkness while digging.

**\* DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK TO THE SEA.** Sneaker waves are common and very dangerous. They're called sneaker waves for a reason. These strong waves appear without warning and run high up the beach. They can easily knock over adults and tumble you out to sea. Children and pets are especially prone to this.

\* Waves travelling farther up beaches can float vehicles, pulling them and the occupants out to sea. A wave over 6" can float vehicles.

\* Use extreme caution while driving on beaches, especially during night clam digs when visibility is low.

WDFW tentatively plans 8 days of razor clam digging in March, April

*Much of the information was obtained through funbeach.com. The information has been changed to reflect Grays Harbor County conditions.*

## All Hazard Alert Weather Radios

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The fastest, easiest and most reliable way to obtain emergency and disaster warning information for any type emergency or disaster event in Western Washington, is by obtaining an **All Hazard ALERT Weather Radio**. The radios are quiet and will activate when ALERT warnings are sent out for severe weather, flooding, earthquake, tsunami and even tornado. The radio, on 24 hours each day, is quiet most of the time and will activate with a loud tone notifying you something has occurred and for you to turn off the tone to listen and view the site screen indicating the situation which caused the activation.

All Hazard Alert Weather Radios can also alert the deaf and hard of hearing with one of the following accessories.

- Strobe Light
- Pillow Vibrator
- Bed Shaker



# GET A KIT MAKE A PLAN BE PREPARED

## Emergency Preparedness- The Big Bang Theory



Click [HERE](#) for video



## 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake and Tsunami

By Brynne Walker, Washington State Emergency Management

On March 27th, 1964, a magnitude 9.2 earthquake occurred between the southern tip of Kodiak Island and Cordova, Alaska (Noson and others, 1988) generating a tsunami that was felt along the west coast from Alaska to California.

This earthquake and tsunami took the lives of 103 people in Alaska, four people in Oregon, and 12 people in California (Noson and others, 1988). Fortunately, there were no deaths in Washington State, however this event did cause tsunami damage along the Copalis River where a small bridge was destroyed.



Bridge collapse after the tsunami debris came down the Copalis River (Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



Bridge collapse on State Route 109 over Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County (Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

This tsunami also damaged a bridge on State Route 109 over Joe Creek and tore apart a house in Pacific Beach.



House torn apart from tsunami debris in Pacific Beach, Grays Harbor County (Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

[https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/ger\\_tsuinfo\\_2014\\_v16\\_no1.pdf](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/ger_tsuinfo_2014_v16_no1.pdf)

## 1964 Quake: The Great Alaska Earthquake

### USGS Documentary

The **1964 Alaskan earthquake**, also known as the **Great Alaskan earthquake** and **Good Friday earthquake**, occurred at 5:36 PM **AST** on **Good Friday**, March 27. Across south-central **Alaska**, ground fissures, collapsing structures, and **tsunamis** resulting from the earthquake caused about 139 deaths.

Lasting four minutes and thirty-eight seconds, the magnitude 9.2 **megathrust earthquake** was the most powerful recorded in **North American** history, and the second **most powerful recorded** in world history. 600 miles of fault ruptured at once, and moved up to 60 feet (about 500 years of stress buildup). **Soil liquefaction**, fissures, landslides, and other ground failures caused major structural damage in several communities and much damage to property. **Anchorage** sustained great destruction or damage to many inadequately **earthquake-engineered** houses, buildings, and infrastructure (paved streets, sidewalks, water and sewer mains, electrical systems, and other man-made equipment), particularly in the several landslide zones along **Knik Arm**. Two hundred miles southwest, some areas near Kodiak were permanently raised by 30 feet (9.1 m). Southeast of Anchorage, areas around the head of **Turnagain Arm** near **Girdwood** and **Portage** dropped as much as 8 feet (2.4 m), requiring reconstruction and fill to raise the Seward Highway above the new high **tide** mark.



# Contacts & Info

Request for Preparedness on  
the Harbor Newsletter Articles  
Submit your article and pictures  
to  
[cmccullough@co.grays-  
harbor.wa.us](mailto:cmccullough@co.grays-harbor.wa.us)  
Deadline is April 6, 2018



All Hazards Alert Broadcast (AHAB) Siren testing  
occurs the first Monday of every month at noon.

Moclips

**Sheriff Rick Scott**  
Director Emergency Management  
(360) 249-3711  
[soadmin@co.grays-harbor.wa.us](mailto:soadmin@co.grays-harbor.wa.us)

**Chuck Wallace**  
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**Grays Harbor Emergency  
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310 W Spruce Street,  
Montesano, WA 98563  
(360) 249-3911  
Fax (360) 249-3805  
[ghcdem@co.grays-harbor.wa.us](mailto:ghcdem@co.grays-harbor.wa.us)

## Article & Photo Credit

*Moments of Misfortune*  
By Chuck Wallace  
Edited by Lisa Ballou

**ATTEND** the Grays Harbor Citizen Corp  
meetings the second Wednesday of every month  
at 9am, in the Grays Harbor County  
Forestry Building.  
**310 W Spruce St Montesano, WA 98563**

*Meet with other county agencies and  
organizations working on disaster preparedness in  
our county. Check out their Facebook page too.*  
[www.facebook.com/GraysHarborCitizenCorps](http://www.facebook.com/GraysHarborCitizenCorps)

**SIGN UP** for the Grays Harbor Emergency  
Notification System to receive Emergency &  
Disaster information on winter storms,  
earthquakes, flooding, from Grays Harbor  
[Emergency Management](http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/DEMNotificationRequest.php)  
[http://cms5.revize.com/revize/  
graysharborcounty/departments/  
emergency\\_management/  
DEMNotificationRequest.php](http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/DEMNotificationRequest.php)

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**VISIT** the Grays Harbor Emergency  
Management website at  
[http://cms5.revize.com/revize/  
graysharborcounty/departments/  
emergency\\_management/index.php](http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/index.php)

## Upcoming Events

**MOULAGE MAYHEM**  
**Burns at the Beach**  
"Advanced Only"

March 17th  
10am - 5pm

GHFD #7  
4576 State Rte 109  
Pacific Beach, WA 98571

Look for Upcoming Events on  
the Emergency Management  
Website

[http://cms5.revize.com/revize/  
graysharborcounty/departments/  
emergency\\_management/training.php](http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/training.php)

Listen for Tammy Fairley of  
the Ocean Shores CERT Team  
at 9am on: 91.3FM or at [http://  
koswradio.com](http://koswradio.com)

March 22nd  
April 26th



## Upcoming Meetings

**Citizen Corps**  
March 14th - 9:00am  
April 11th - 9:00am  
**LEPC**  
March 14th - 10:15am  
April 11th - 10:15am