



# Link Line



an update from **MASHA** on **YOUR** Mine Rescue program

Issue #4 December 2007

## Training for Real Life

Contrary to appearances in the news, Ontario mine rescuers don't just train to win competitions, they train to save lives.

That's what they did in 2006. In addition to competing to take home gold helmets in a simulated emergency at the provincial competition, rescue teams sent home four people after rescuing them in real mine emergencies.

Forty-three mine rescue teams responded to seven fire and six non-fire or other emergencies underground, as well as 15 emergency simulations and fire drills.

Of course, though that might not be common knowledge, that's not new. In 2005, mine rescue teams rescued five people, responding to nine fire and two non-fire emergencies underground, as well as 25 emergency simulations and fire drills. The 46 teams involved in those call outs spent almost 23 hours under oxygen.

Non-fire emergency responses include rock bursts, falls of ground, and inundation of material or water. Fire drills include emergency simulations.

Competitions are important. Saving lives is more important.



## Uninterested Rescuer Stays for 40 Years

*For a man who wasn't particularly interested in mine rescue when he started, Fred Fell stayed involved for almost 40 years.*

"I didn't have a real reason (to join). We were approached to join and we said, 'Sure,'" said Fell, of the time in 1965 when Dickenson Mine in Red Lake was recruiting for its mine rescue team.

Fell started his mining career as a student in 1957, and went underground as soon as he turned 18, but mine rescue

didn't interest him until he and his friends were recruited.

He recalls being trained on the McCaa breathing apparatus, using it once underground on an exercise, before switching to the then new BG174.

"Now that was an improvement," he said, noting that over 40 years "the biggest changes have been in the equipment and in what they want to use mine rescue people for."

Mine rescuers were organized to respond to underground fires, but in the 1970s, thinking changed, Fell said. "Different disasters happened around

the world, and people started to look at mine rescuers as the ones who could go in and get the people out."

Fell left Dickenson and mining in 1969 to return to school and work for Ontario Hydro, but returned to mining in 1971 at the Griffith Mine, near Ear Falls, and to mine rescue at Shebandowan Mine, from 1972 to 1986, where he served as captain.

Fell returned to Dickenson and the rescue team there in 1986, but a problem loomed as his fiftieth birthday approached, the age limit for rescue

Continued on page 2

Thank you for  
20 Years  
of service!

Rick Wills,  
Campbell Mine, Red Lake

Mark Hilton,  
Campbell Mine, Red Lake

Kevan Bassingthwaite,  
Campbell Mine, Red Lake

Dave Drake,  
CVRD Inco

Randy Montour,  
Canadian Salt

James McClintock,  
Canadian Salt

### We need you!

If you have comments about the newsletter, or suggestions for future articles, please contact Susan Haldane at MASHA, (705) 474-7233 ext. 261, or [susanhaldane@masha.on.ca](mailto:susanhaldane@masha.on.ca)



Mines and Aggregates  
Safety and Health  
Association

P.O. Box 2050, Stn. Main  
690 McKeown Ave.  
North Bay, ON P1B 9P1  
PH: (705) 474-7233  
FAX: (705) 472-5800  
[www.masha.on.ca](http://www.masha.on.ca)

## Uninterested Rescuer Stays for 40 Years continued from pg 1

work under oxygen at that time.

“I decided I’m not going to have someone tell me I couldn’t do mine rescue any more.”

So Fell became a technician in 1990, staying active for another 15 years and competing several times as a technician before retiring from mine rescue and mining. Though he never won as a technician, his teams won several district competitions, including once when he was captain in 1984.

Fell remembers the days when the provincial mine rescue competition took months to complete.

“There were times you didn’t find out who won until the end of the summer.”

That’s when George McPhail, Ontario’s Senior Mine Rescue Officer, would travel the province visiting the districts and mines to test the teams underground.

“Even though they were make believe, they were underground. If you had a thousand feet to go, you went a thousand feet.”

Fell doesn’t admit to missing the more active life of a mine rescuer, but he does admit to “dragging my wife” to provincial competitions, where he willingly serves as a “victim” while thinking about what he would have done had the scenario unfolded during his years as a mine rescuer.



*Fred Fell, inset and front centre, was captain of the Shebandowan Mine rescue team at the 1984 Provincial mine rescue competition.*

## ▶ New But No Novice

Wayne Baker may be Ontario Mine Rescue’s newest mine rescue officer, but he’s no novice with Ontario Mine Rescue.

Kirkland Lake Mine Rescue Station’s new MRO has more than 30 years mining experience, including 28 years as a mine rescuer.

Baker, who assumed his post at the end of July, started his career with Denison Mines in Elliot Lake in 1974 working as a miner, supervisor and instructor for 18 years before the mine closed.

While with Denison, he joined the mine rescue team in 1978 and over the next three decades he participated in 30 mine rescue competitions, including five provincial competitions, winning a coveted gold helmet in 2000. Baker has also trained and competed as a mine rescue technician.

The Mactier, Ontario, native received his mining technologist diploma from Cambrian College in 1994, and worked at the Holloway Mine, near Kirkland Lake, from 1994 to 2006, and most recently at Dynatec Mining’s Levack Mine before joining Ontario Mine Rescue

To contact Wayne: Tel (705) 567-4606  
Fax (705) 567-3649  
Cell (705) 568-7708  
E-mail: waynebaker@masha.on.ca

## He Shoots, He . . . Extinguishes the Fire

Harry Neale and Bob Cole are not booked yet for the 2008 Provincial Mine Rescue Competition, but live commentary on the action will be one of the improvements visitors will notice next June when the event returns underground at the Fecunis Mine, near Sudbury.

This will be only the second time in almost 40 years the Provincial competition will be held underground, better approximating the actual conditions mine rescuers work under. The competition was first held at Fecunis, NORCAT’s underground training centre, in 2004.

“We’ve broken the trail, now we just have to follow our footsteps with a few changes and improvements,” said Charlie Burton, mine rescue program supervisor.

Visitors will get a better view and a better understanding of what rescue teams are doing. Though they still will not be allowed underground to see the action first-hand, there will be more cameras in more

**continued on pg 4**

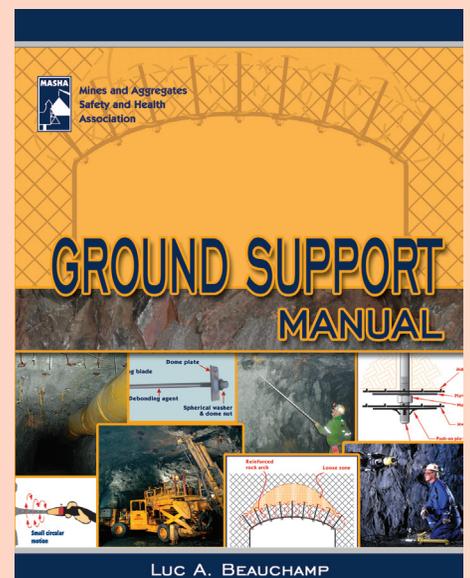
## New Resource for Mine Rescue Responders

Not all mine emergencies are fire emergencies, so for first responders to better prepare to handle situations where falls of ground or poor ground conditions are a concern MASHA has a new resource - Ground Support Manual.

Intended as a practical tool for supervisors, engineers, and anyone who needs detailed and practical information on ground support, including mine rescue personnel, the manual is written in an easy-to-read format with more than 300 pictures and illustrations

The 285-page book will help mine rescue responders identify ground conditions and evaluate in-place ground support during an emergency. The manual also provides information on proper manual scaling tools and techniques.

To order, visit [www.masha.on.ca/products.aspx](http://www.masha.on.ca/products.aspx) or call (705) 474-7233 ext. 279. Cost per copy is \$50 for MASHA members, \$90 for non-members, plus shipping and handling.



# Generating Interest in Foam Fire Suppression

## Some mine rescuers are getting another tool in their arsenal to fight underground fires.

Windsor Salt has purchased and demonstrated a new foam generator to fight fires in its mine where water is not a practical fire suppression solution. Mine rescuers at Windsor Salt normally use dry chemical extinguishers, but must find more creative methods for persistent fires.

On a recent tire fire that kept re-igniting due to heat, for example, rescuers used five-gallon bottles of drinking water to extinguish the fire and suppress the heat. They then monitored the tire with a thermal imaging camera, occasionally dosing the tire to cool it and prevent re-ignition.

The generator, which can be fitted in the back of a half-ton truck, consists of a compressed tank of nitrogen, a 120-gallon tank of water, and a smaller tank of AFFF foam concentrate.

When used to fight a fire, the nitrogen is used to pressurize the water tank; the pressure is used to draw the concentrate into a hose to be directed on the fire. It has a 75-foot throw. The foam coats and seals the burning material cutting it off from oxygen, and cooling the heat.

The foam generator, available from its U.S. manufacturer for about \$9,000, is being considered by other Southern Ontario non-metal mines, as well as by some northern hard rock mines where water pressure, water quality, or access to water are concerns.



## Sharing the World's Mine Rescue Expertise

Mine rescuers from around the world are sharing their expertise with each other.

The third biennial conference of the International Mine Rescue Body (IMRB) brought representatives from mine rescue organizations from 14 countries to Nashville, Tenn., in August.

"The amount of expertise in that room was just incredible," said Ontario Mine Rescue manager Alex Gryska, who presented a paper on Ontario Mine Rescue and moderated an afternoon of presentations during the International Mines Rescue Conference.

The theme of the three-and-a-half day conference was Effective Mine Emergency Operations. Participants discussed mine emergency command

centre operations, responsibilities during mine emergency operations, the effects of stress and fatigue on emergency decision-making, on-site management of mine rescue teams, and mobilizing rescue teams.

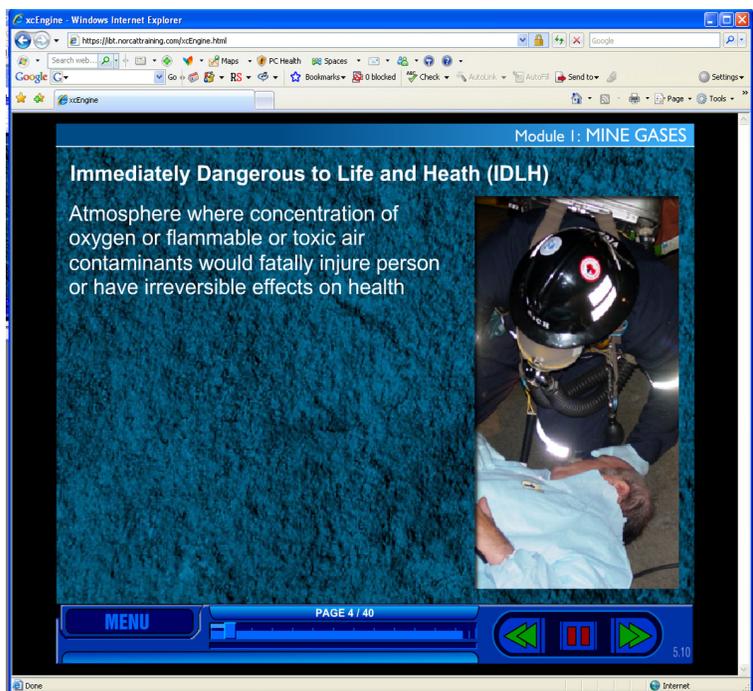
Presentations included papers on how mine rescue operations run in different jurisdictions, minimizing risk in mine rescue, evaluating new technologies for mine rescue training, the development of a rescue mask with a drinking device for the BG4 breathing apparatus, and suggestions on organizing an international mine rescue competition.

The final session involved participants problem solving mine rescue scenarios, Gryska said, and set up the focus for the next conference

in 2009 in the Czech Republic which will work toward developing a best-practice approach to common mine rescue situations.

Countries represented at Nashville included the United States, Australia, Canada, China, Romania, Brazil, New Zealand, Peru, Norway, South Africa, Poland, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

The IMRB was founded in 2001 and meets every two years to promote mine rescue at an international level, and to improve mine rescue knowledge and practices by supporting global co-operation and the exchange of information on training, rescue techniques and equipment.



## On-line Course On Line

Ontario Mine Rescue's first on-line course is on line. The mine gas course's two modules, mine gases and specific mine gas hazards were piloted in November with miners from Windsor and Sudbury taking the introductory mine rescue course. The mine gas course, available through the Northern Ontario Centre for Advanced Technology's (NORCAT) website, gives mine rescuers the opportunity to learn at their own pace, easily review material, and better retain valuable information. The interactive course, designed exclusively for mine rescue trainees, will be phased in and requires more attention and involvement by participants than the current one-hour lecture on mine gases in the mine rescue course.

Though the change will allow instructors to spend more in-class time on other topics, time will still be spent covering oxygen, methane and carbon monoxide which are targeted in a section on mine gas detection.

The mandatory on-line mine gas module covers material about gases commonly found in mines, while the optional specific hazard module covers dangers associated with specific gases found in mines.

Each module offers the required information with charts, diagrams and pictures, review questions after each section, and final tests with an 80 percent mark required for completion.

Ontario mine rescue participants will be given a password from their mine rescue instructor to access the course.

## Farewell to Friends

Mine rescuer **John Hallows** passed away Sept. 8. Hallows, 83, served as mine rescue officer for the Sudbury Station from 1955 to 1958, and again from 1965 to 1978, and then served as repair technician for the Mine Rescue Program until his retirement in 1988.

The British-born Hallows spiced his courses with his unique sense of humour, and was not beyond practical jokes, especially to teach a lesson.

"He was a very interesting person to train with," said Charlie Burton, mine rescue program supervisor.

Once convinced that mine rescuers were taking shortcuts and not properly field testing their BG174 breathing apparatus, Hallows quietly removed the inhalation valves to test rescuers. Only six of 150 Sudbury area rescuers caught and reported the malfunction.

"He proved his point and taught everybody a lesson," Burton said.

Hallows stopped in Sudbury in 1948 on a trip across Canada after serving in Palestine during the Second World War. He met his bride-to-be, found a job with Falconbridge, and became a mine rescuer there before joining Ontario Mine Rescue.

**Pat McArdle**, a former mine rescue officer in Timmins and Manitouwadge, died this summer.

McArdle, 46, joined the Ministry of Labour in 1992 as an inspector, and became the MRO at Timmins Station in 1996. He later moved to the Manitouwadge Station in Thunder Bay District.

After taking sick leave in 1999 and having a heart transplant in 2002, McArdle rejoined the Ministry of Labour as a program co-ordinator based in London. A recipient and advocate of organ donation awareness, he in turn became a donor.

McArdle died July 3, and is survived by his wife and two children.

## He Shoots, He . . . Extinguishes the Fire continued from pg 2

locations, and on-going live commentary so people can better follow the activity on monitors.

Though a video feed was provided in 2004, visitors often found it difficult to follow. Each area of planned activity had cameras and a cameraman followed each team, but activity occurred in some unplanned and uncovered areas.

This time cameras will be established to provide distance shots and the commentary will provide details and scope to the activity areas that may not be readily evident on the video feed.

"They will know where the team is and what they are doing," Burton said.

Work on the scenario is in the early stages, but development of the mine due to training activity will ensure the usual unexpected twist to challenge rescuers.



Mine Rescue Link Line newsletter is published twice a year by the Mines and Aggregates Safety and Health Association. The association is funded by mining and aggregates workplaces in the province, through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

The information in this publication is accurate to the best of our knowledge. However, the association assumes no responsibility or liability for the accuracy or sufficiency of this information, nor does it endorse any product mentioned herein with the exception of those produced by MASHA. MASHA©2007

Would you like to receive this newsletter directly by email? Please send your request to [isabellacaron@masha.on.ca](mailto:isabellacaron@masha.on.ca)



Mines and Aggregates Safety and Health Association

P.O. Box 2050, Str. Main  
690 McKeown Ave.  
North Bay, Ont. P1B 9P1  
PH: (705) 474-7233  
FAX: (705) 472-5800  
[www.masha.on.ca](http://www.masha.on.ca)