



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

Issue #5 May 2008

Charting a course through Ontario Mining History



An estimated 900 carloads of flammable waste – sawdust, paper, broken wood boxes and carbide – was stuffed in a drift on the 550 level.

Known to many, the waste was seemingly of concern to no one. After all who could believe a damp, hard rock mine could experience a fire, so no precautions were taken – no alarm system, no fire doors, no emergency plan, nothing.

When the waste did break into fire in February 1928 sending dense smoke and deadly carbon monoxide through North

America's largest gold mine, the Hollinger Mine in Timmins, it endangered the lives of hundreds of miners, claimed the lives of 39, and required the expertise of

American mine rescuers to extinguish.

Lessons learned from the largest disaster in Ontario mining history, 80 years ago this year, continue to be put into practice today, not the least of which is Ontario Mine Rescue, established a year after the Hollinger mine fire.

The creation of a provincial mine rescue system was the chief recommendation of Judge T.E. Godson after his investigation into the disaster, but it was not his only recommendation that set a preventive and proactive course, rather than a reactive course, to mine emergencies in Ontario.

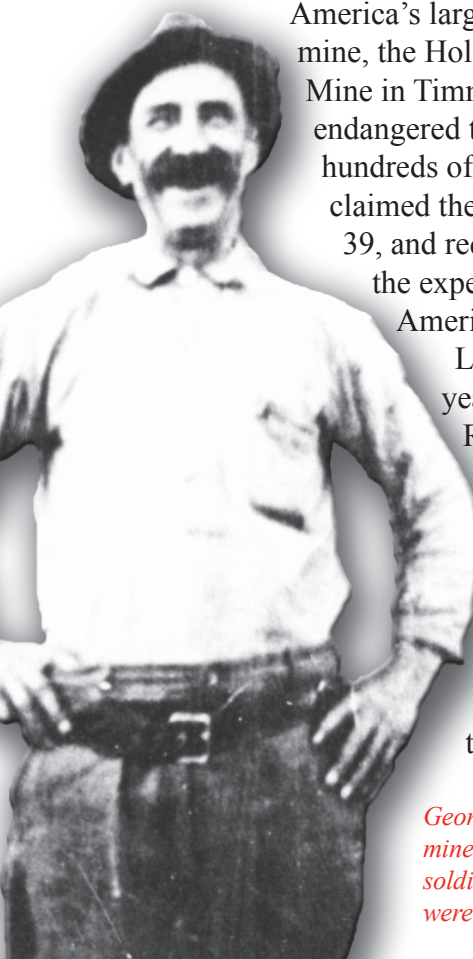
Godson recommended 14 other measures, such as equipping mines with a stench gas system to alert miners of emergencies; removing all flammable waste to the surface; limiting the amount of oil and grease kept underground; placing fire doors at each station; the installation of fire protection measures; and posting emergency exit signs.

All had the intent of reducing the likelihood of another disaster, and of reducing the risk of injury or death should

George Zolob, a hero of the Hollinger fire, saved the lives of 11 miners. It was later discovered that Zolob had been gassed as a soldier in the Bulgarian army. His words, "Maybe die...maybe no!" were remembered and often repeated by the miners saved.



Mine Rescue men from the U.S. Bureau of Mines wearing full gear being inspected about the time a team was rushed to Timmins to help with the Hollinger Mine disaster.



Continued on page 2

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



**Mines and Aggregates
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Association**

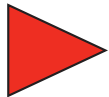
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No More Arm Twisting



Musselwhite Mine's all-First Nations mine rescue team plans to build on success, having put first-year competition anxiety and recruiting difficulties behind them.



From twisting arms to having a pick of volunteers – what a difference a year made for Musselwhite Mine's First Nation Mine Rescue Competition team.

"We had to twist arms," said briefing officer Frances Machimity, who was asked to join the team by Ron Gray and Paul Dube. The two mine rescuers came up with the idea of a First Nation team during a floor hockey game in the spring of 2006, thought about it through the summer, and took up the idea again in the fall.

"They asked a couple people then we went to Markus Uchtenhagen," said Machimity. Musselwhite's safety and training manager told them to recruit enough members for a team and then to come back.

Approximately 25 per cent of Musselwhite's 400 workers are from First Nations, but when asking and friendly persuasion failed to get the team up to strength, Machimity said they had to resort to arm twisting. Lucas Nothing, Ray Quedent, Charlie Bottle and Nora Shakakeesic joined Gray, Dube and Machimity.

After that there was no looking back for what is probably the first all-First Nation mine rescue team in Ontario.

"We were all trained mine rescuers," Machimity, "but we never trained together before," or for competition.

The reluctance, she said, came from the increased time away from family and home that additional training for competition at the fly-in, fly-out mine would take, and "we did a lot of overtime training."

The next challenge for most team members was studying, particularly the mine gases unit, Machimity said.

"All those numbers," she said with a sigh. "I found it overwhelming."

"Management has been very supportive," said Machimity, ensuring the team received training, entering it in the district competition and, even though they didn't win, sending it to Sault Ste. Marie to watch, learn and participate as "victims" in the 2007 provincial competition.

Despite nerves – "all those judges with clipboards watching you and writing things down" – the team did all right in the district competition, though they didn't feel good about the little mistakes that "you know better than to make," Machimity said.

The district competition, however, was a valuable learning experience that they will now be able to call on, she said. Had they competed in the provincial competition, "I think they would have done pretty well."

Nerves gone, at least for now, the team is working hard for this year's district competition and a shot at the provincial competition, she said.

Also gone is the reluctance of First Nation mine rescuers to join the team. Clayton Kitchkeesik and Wilfred Machimity, Frances' husband who hadn't been trained in mine rescue last year, volunteered and joined.

Others have asked to join, Machimity said. "They say, 'You're on the First Nation rescue team? Is this year's team full? We'd like to join it.'"

Charting a course through Ontario Mining History

Continued from page 1

one occur. Subsequent inquiries into mercifully lesser tragedies have maintained and underlined the course Godson charted, that preventive and emergency preparedness measures are preferable to after-the-fact corrective measures.

Since 1929 Ontario Mine Rescue and thousands of mine rescue volunteers have attempted to steer that seemingly simple course, knowing not only that being prepared to save lives at risk is better than not being prepared, but that not putting those lives at risk is best.

Success should not be measured by the number of lives saved, but the number of lives never put at risk.

World's Best to Compete in Reno

The Sixth International Mine Rescue Competition, with mine rescue teams from around the world, will be held July 14 to 17 in Reno, Nevada.

The competition, held in conjunction with the U.S. National Mine Rescue Competition, will involve international rescue teams demonstrating their rescue skills in solving the same problems as the American mine rescue teams in locating and rescuing lost miners.

The U.S. competition will begin July 15 at the Reno Sparks Convention Centre and will be followed by the international competition July 17.

Ten teams from eight countries including Peru, Australia, Russia, India, the U.S., Poland and China competed in the last international competition held in Pingdingshan City, in China in 2006. The first international competition was held in Louisville, Kentucky in 1999.

Forget Sun, Sand and Surf, Try Smoke, Stope and Stumble

When university study week rolls around most students think of warm, sun-drenched (and party-filled) beaches, but a few mining engineering students think of stumbling around a smoke-filled stope looking for a “missing” miner instead.

“Rather than go to Florida or Mexico, they decided to come here and take mine rescue training,” said Sudbury-based mine rescue officer Bruce Hall, who with John Hagan helped teach this year’s student mine rescue class, Feb. 19 to 22.

The program started about 30 years ago in an arrangement with the former Haileybury School of Mines, said Lionel Rudd, who as a Laurentian University engineering technologist has played a major role in organizing it for almost 20 years “to make sure it happened every year.”



This year’s student mine rescue course had an international flavour: From left Canadian Natalie Kari, Maty Mooketsana from Botswana, and Esther Chong from the Republic of Mauritius. A second student from Botswana and two from China also attended.



“It’s a good thing for the students, it’s a good thing for MASHA, and a good thing for the industry because you end up with a lot of very highly skilled mine rescue people in the field,” Rudd said.

The program has become a tradition over the years training more than 1,000 students from various post-secondary institutions, including Haileybury, Queen’s University, and Cambrian College. Since about 1990 most of the students have come from Laurentian, but for the last three years the University of Toronto has also sent students.

“We’ve always had a full class,” said Rudd, who retired from Laurentian in September, but stayed

Continued on page 6

Maintaining a Bridge of Communications

Keeping it real, that’s the task of the Mine Rescue Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Comprised of mining industry volunteers from the mining, supervisory and administrative levels, as well as Ministry of Labour and Ontario Mine Rescue representatives, the TAC plays several key roles, not the least of which is providing a bridge of communication between industry and mine rescue.

Members meet regularly to review, evaluate and provide Ontario Mine Rescue with advice and direction on equipment, training, issues, and research projects with the goal of continually improving the

emergency preparedness of Ontario mines and mine rescue.

The committee’s expertise and advice has been indispensable in the selection of new equipment in recent years, including the replacement of the BG174 with the BG4, the introduction of the iTX Multi-gas Monitor, the thermal imaging camera, the foam generator unit, the Test-it 6100, and the CAREvent DRA Automatic Rescue Ventilator.

But reviewing and evaluating potential new equipment is only a part of the TAC’s job. It has played a major role in the shift to competency based training, the creation of support materials such as checklists, guides and manuals, and the content of mine rescue training programs.

Members aided in the establishment of the key measurables data base, a comprehensive training and experience profile on each mine rescue volunteer, and the development of the Point-in-Time Assessment Tool to evaluate a mine’s emergency preparedness.

The committee also identifies and keeps a steady eye on issues and

Continued on page 4

Forget Sun, Sand and Surf, Try Smoke, Stope and Stumble

Continued from page 3

around to help organize the class for one final year.

This year 13 students from the two universities learned about the iTX Multi-gas Monitor, the BG4, mine rescue procedures and more. On the fourth day, the students were taken to Vale Inco Ltd.'s Garson Mine for a simulation involving a missing miner in a smoke-filled stope.

The class included a student from Mauritius, two students from Botswana, and two from China, one of whom had been on a mine safety team in an iron mine.

The course does not count for university credits, Hall said, but does give them a solid understanding of mine rescue and gives many a step toward becoming mine rescuers.

"It's quite common in the industry" for students to continue on to become mine rescuers, said Hall, who estimates about 20 per cent of the mine rescuers he works with at Vale Inco Ltd. are graduates of the student program.

All they require is to pass a medical examination, complete the standard written and performance examination, and meet the assurance of qualification, to be eligible to join a mine rescue team.

"The important thing is we expose our engineering students to mine rescue and it improves their knowledge of safety," said Rudd, who credits the success of the program to the mine rescue officers who teach it.

"It really says something about the skills and dedication of the mine rescue officers."

New Faces, New Places

Emanuel (Manny) Cabral is the newest mine rescue officer to be based in Sudbury. Cabral has been a mine rescue volunteer since 2000 in Manitouwadge.

Meanwhile Duane Croswell will set up shop as the mine rescue officer in the Thunder Bay station. Croswell has been an active mine rescuer volunteer since 1997, most recently at Musselwhite Mine.

Shawn Kirwan, former mine rescue officer in Thunder Bay, has moved to our Sudbury office to assume the new position of emergency services specialist.

Maintaining a Bridge of Communications

Continued from page 3

projects that involve or affect mine rescue, such as interactive on-line training, and the revision of the Mine Rescue Handbook. Members continue to monitor and review research done by the University of Ottawa into heat stress on mine rescuers.

Committee members not only provide guidance and leadership to Ontario Mine Rescue, they hold a similar position in the mining industry, where they promote the goals and objectives of mine rescue by building understanding and appreciation of emergency preparedness.



The Mine Rescue Technical Advisory Committee's expertise and advice has been indispensable in the selection of new equipment, such as the iTX Multi-gas Monitor, in recent years.

Mine Rescue Technical Advisory Committee Members

Tim Malony	Vale Inco	Chair	Mike Dudar	Vale Inco Worker rep
Wally Bennett	Xstrata Nickel Sudbury	Vice Chair	Markus Uchtenhagen	Goldcorp
Bob Leblanc	Xstrata Copper Timmins		Scotty Robertson	Ministry Of Labour
Gilbert Wahl	Wesdome		Bruce Hall	MASHA
Joe Wojtus	Northgate Minerals		Charlie Burton	MASHA
Doug Osborne	Windsor Salt		Alex Gryska	MASHA
Robert McLean	Moran Mining			

IMRB Launches Website

Mine rescuers from around the world have a place to call their own on the Internet.

The International Mines Rescue Body (IMRB), an informal association representing mine rescue organizations from countries around the world, has launched its own website at www.minerescue.org.

The site was prepared and will be maintained by Ontario Mine Rescue and the Mines and Aggregate Safety and Health Association, under the authority of the IMRB.

The website has three main sections: About IMRB, IMRB Members, and IMRB Events. Subsections include the history of the IMRB, its purpose and bylaws, links to member mine rescue organizations, and information on conferences, competitions, and papers and presentations made to recent IMRB conferences.



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Thank You for Twenty Years of Service!

Robert Hache - Formerly Williams Mine (now working in Sudbury)

Norm Begin - David Bell Mine

2008 Mine Rescue Competitions

All District Competitions May 8 - 9, 2008

Provincial Competitions June 6 - 7, 2008

Location - NORCAT

Fecunis Mine Training Centre
Onaping, Ontario

For more information contact:
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About the Mine Rescue Newsletter

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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.



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