



# VSA NEWSLETTER

*40th Season Anniversary!*

VOLUME 2008/09 ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2009

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Jan 15/08 Press Release from the Canadian Avalanche Centre
- Avalanche Awareness—tips that could save a life!
- Avalanche Skills Training—Level 1
- NORAC Basic Amateur Radio Course
- Take a Friend Snowmobiling

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## MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GORD

Happy new year to all our members....and a big welcome to all our new members!

First of all, on behalf of the VSA, I would like to express our sincere condolences to all of the families and friends of those who have lost their lives to avalanches this snowmobile season.

I understand from a recent newscast that there have been 26 snowmobilers lost to avalanches in western Canada so far this season. A bad snow pack has resulted in very unstable conditions, **so please be careful when you go out.** This newsletter deals mainly with avalanche preparedness: some helpful tips that could save a life, suggested avalanche skills training course, and a recent press release from the Canadian Avalanche Centre.

You can take all the available rescue gear along with you, but it won't do you (or others) much good if you don't know how to use it. **All snowmobilers need to take a course such as those offered by the Canadian Ava-**



This small slide on a northeast-facing slope killed a snowmobiler in February 1992

### lanche Centre.

On a lighter note, this year's annual Ladies Ride is set for March 21 at Hunters Range. Any ladies interested (and that includes your spouse as well!) are encouraged to contact Carrie Weber at 250838-0563 or 250-309-7866 ([weberstrategies@xplornet.com](mailto:weberstrategies@xplornet.com))

We have yet to have our annual Kids Ride (normally held in December but the snow show took up so much of our time and energy that the Kids Ride got pushed aside this year). It's on the agenda for our next meeting

(this Thurs. Jan 22) tentatively to occur in March..... Please come to the meeting and help us put together a fun day for both **underprivileged children as well as our VSA kids.**

Have fun out there, but ride safe.

**Please be aware of the avalanche conditions before you ride.**

*GORD*

## VSA MEETINGS

4th Thursday of each month

**EVERYONE WELCOME!**

Join us for coffee and donuts and have a say in your Club, events, etc. A Club is only as good as its members....we need your input!

NEXT MEETING:

**THURS. JAN 22**

**7 :00 PM**

**The People Place**

**3402—27 AVE., VERNON**

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

**February 26, 2009  
March 26, 2009**

January 15/2009

## **DUE TO THE CURRENT AVALANCHE CONDITIONS IN THE PROVINCE, THE CANADIAN AVALANCHE CENTRE HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE**

### **Rescue Gear Is Not Enough**

Education and Preparation Key to Avoiding Avalanche Accidents

January 15, 2009, Revelstoke, BC: A series of recent avalanche fatalities in BC has underlined the need to communicate an important message-rescue gear is not enough! Twelve of the 13 people killed in this province were wearing transceivers and at least three were wearing the new air bag systems.

"Rescue equipment is only one part of the equation," says Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) Public Avalanche Forecaster Karl Klassen. "The focus should really be on choosing terrain appropriate to the conditions and *preventing* accidents, not just reacting to them." The CAC is working together with the BC Snowmobile Federation, the Association of BC Snowmobile Clubs and the Alberta Snowmobile Association to encourage these safe habits for all the members of their organizations.

Backcountry users need current snowpack information and avalanche education to make appropriate terrain choices.

"The snowpack is constantly changing," explains Klassen. "Public forecasters devote a tremendous amount of time and expertise to tracking those changes and communicating the hazard as it fluctuates throughout the winter. Everyone using the winter backcountry should be taking advantage of this service and staying in tune with these changes." Avalanche bulletins are available at [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca) or by phone at 1 800 667 1105.

Avalanche education is available through many different providers throughout western Canada. The CAC has course providers posted on our website, listed by location. A basic avalanche awareness course is sixteen hours over two days and focuses on recognizing avalanche terrain and trip planning. Instructors who teach snowmobile-specific courses are highlighted.

The CAC issues avalanche forecasts three times a week throughout the winter, and daily during the Christmas and Easter holiday periods. The CAC website also hosts the public forecasts issued by the mountain National Parks, Whistler/Blackcomb, Alberta's Kananaskis Country, and the Centre d'avalanche de la Haute Gaspésie in Québec.

#### **For more information contact**

Mary Clayton, CAC Communications Director 250.837.2141 (228) [mclayton@avalanche.ca](mailto:mclayton@avalanche.ca)

### **The VSA sends condolences to the families and friends of all the snowmobilers lost to recent avalanches**

The VSA Board of Directors would like to express their heartfelt sorrow and sympathy on the loss of Matthew Simmons (Enderby) and the 8 snowmobilers from the Sparwood and Fernie area. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and friends.

If you snowmobile in avalanche terrain you should view [Jeff Adams 20 minute account](#) of this terrible tragedy

<http://www.cbc.ca/mrl3/8752/bc/ondemand/video/bc-081231-sparwood-survivor-CLIP.wmv>

## Avalanche Awareness - tips that could save a life!

These tips came from the Avalanche Safety pamphlet from Alaska, specifically for those who are into high-marking, but these are tips that should be followed by ALL sledders:

1. Watch for recent avalanches - don't play on similar, unreleased slopes.
2. Watch for amount of new snow or wind loading on leeward slopes.
3. Beware of rain. If it is raining it will weaken the snow quickly but will stabilize when refrozen.
4. Listen for whumping noises, you may even feel it when you get a group of sleds together in one spot. The extra load causes the collapse of a weaker buried layer of snow. This could be the layer that lets go and allows a slab to release. This collapse of a weak layer can actually travel a long way and release a large slope that you are not actually on. The release could have a track long enough to catch your group.
5. Watch for shooting cracks in the snow, this shows the snow is ripe for fracturing.
6. Does the snow have a hollow sound to it? This could indicate a buried weak layer.
7. Is the temperature warming quickly? This will weaken snow quickly.

Here are some additional tips:

1. Choose slopes that have been stripped by wind (windward) over slopes that have been loaded (leeward). Snow that is rock hard can still avalanche if it is poorly bonded to layers below. Be wary of steep, smooth, leeward slopes.
2. Start out on the less steep slope angles and on the side of a slope instead of center-punching it. Do your first runs low and fast rather than maximizing your commitment and exposure by climbing as high as possible right away. If possible, do your first runs from the top down to get a feel for the snow and improve your chances of escape.
3. Always turn towards the edge of a slope rather than turning towards the middle.
4. If unsure of the snow stability, favour slopes that have recently avalanched over those that have not yet slid. You can still sled on unstable days — just chose slopes less than 25 degrees that are not connected to anything steeper.
5. Do not approach steep convex rollovers or aim right for a large rock or tree isolated in the middle of a steep slope unless you know the snow is stable. These are places where the snow pack is under greater stress, and thus where you are more likely to trigger a slide. Also be suspicious of steep area where the snow is shallow and weaker.
6. Avoid deadly terrain traps such as gullies, steep-sided creek bottoms, or slopes that end in depressions because of the high probability of a deep burial. Do not ride on slopes with cliffs below. Favour slopes that are fan-shaped at the bottom and do not have obstacles like rocks or trees to crash into. Concave bowls are nasty traps because the fracture propagates around the slope and all the debris collects at the bottom. This is why it is not uncommon for snowmobilers to be buried under 10 to 30 feet of debris.
7. Allow only one rider at a time on the slope. If a person gets stuck, **DO NOT SEND A SECOND SLEDDER TO HELP!!!!** Fact: Roughly 33% of snowmobile fatalities occur when a sled is stuck. About 34% involve more than one machine on a slope at the time of the avalanche. It is common for a second rider to turn above the stuck person and trigger an avalanche onto the sitting duck below.
8. Everyone should be watching the climber from a safe spot.
9. Always park well away from the bottom of steep slopes. Do not count on being able to outrun a slide. Get in the habit of parking parallel rather than one behind the other, have your machine pointing away from the avalanche path, and always have the kill switch up.

**PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE AVALANCHE CONDITIONS BEFORE YOU RIDE**

### GROOMING REPORT— DOUG ROEHRIG

All attempts to get out there and do a big groom, **up until this week**, have been foiled with breakdowns. First all the track repair early in the season, then more recently a hydraulic hose leak followed by a flat tire - and then another hose break (the hoses that are breaking are on the blade—some are getting old and brittle). The main thing is that we managed every time to limp back to the shop. **HOWEVER.....**Brian and I went for good grooming session on Thursday morning (Jan 15) and did the entire Ganzeveld -Passmore loop all the way past the Armstrong chalet. **Everything went well - trails are in great shape** (a group of us were out yesterday—Jan 18)). I also spent about 1.5 hours with the groomer enlarging the parking lot. It's basically back to early season size. There were lots of vehicles in there yesterday and we all had tons of room.

As far as snow levels are concerned, I would estimate 180 cm (6') at the Silver Star chalet, and 120 cm (4') back at the Armstrong cabin. We haven't had any new snow over the past week — but we had a meter of new snow the week before!

Also from what I've heard (and seen) there are definitely more people using our trail system now that the avalanche hazard is so high in the big hills. There were lots of big mountain sled going for an easy tour around the trails yesterday. ☺

I just want to point out that our membership director is slacking off and basking in the Mexican sun! (*sheer envy talking here!*)

Doug



## Avalanche Skills Training (AST) Level 1

The **AST 1** course follows a curriculum developed by the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC). Instructional materials & lesson plans are developed by the CAC. SEE - [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca) for more information.

The full course demands a minimum of 16 hours. The AST 1 is an excellent introduction to avalanche terrain recognition skills, snowpack theory, rescue skills and overall risk management. The course structure is highly interactive and is recommended for those looking for more knowledge OR to refresh their skills.

### CLASSROOM

Exercises require 8 hours and can be completed over a full day or two 4-hour evening sessions.

#### Topics include:

- Formation and Nature of Avalanches
- Snow pack and Snow Stability Factors
- Assessing Avalanche Danger & Bulletins
- Backcountry Travel / Avalanche Terrain
- Safety Measures (Transceivers)
- **\*\* NEW \*\*** learn to use the AVALUATOR system, the CAC's new avalanche decision making tool
- Discussion of past accidents, participate in group activities, view images and video materials.

### FIELD SESSION

Recently held in Sicamous and Revelstoke. Other sessions may be offered BUT will depend on the commitment from students to decide where and when. Following the classroom session, students provide their own snowmobile to participate in eight hours of hands-on field training.

#### Topics Include:

- Terrain Recognition / Safe Travel
- Route Finding
- Hazard Recognition
- Companion Rescue – Transceiver Searches
- Group Management
- Practicing the appropriate travel techniques and rescue scenarios (rather than just attending a lecture on them) makes the classroom sessions sink in!
- Dig in the snow to see weak & strong layers, snow crystals and slab formation – skills necessary to understand Public Avalanche Bulletins that are available at [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca) or 1-800-667-1105

#### \* PLEASE NOTE:

1. The AST Level 1 replaces the Introductory Recreational Avalanche Course (IRAC). This change was made by the Canadian Avalanche Centre in 2006.
2. Maximum student to instructor ratio for field exercises is 8:1
3. A Release of Liability must be signed before participating in any program.
4. You must have completed the classroom session (within the last 2 years) in order to attend the Field session.

**MARKETING REPORT** — DIANNE EVANS

So it looks like the whining I did in my (Treasurer's) report in the November newsletter paid off! Thank you, thank you, thank you to Brian for once again stepping up to the plate and taking back the Treasurer's position (NB, for those of you "i"-dotters and "t"-crossers, this was done officially by a resignation from me and appointment from the VSA Board at the November meeting). One of these days, however, I'm afraid Brian really *will* move to White Lake (when his house in Vernon sells) and the Club will be back to begging for help. Until then, though, we'll continue to enjoy Brian's company, exceptional good looks and tremendous assistance for another season!

I've noticed an increase in traffic on our web-site post-Snow-Show, as well as frequent emails being directed our way from other clubs and entities who have volunteered to put a link to our website from theirs, and/or have asked questions about our trails (none of which has occurred in the past). This is great news and I do believe that the exposure we got at the Snow Show is to be given the credit. So even though we didn't come out that much ahead financially after the show, this increased exposure is making up for it.

Several members have requested that the Club somehow have available a listing of fellow member phone numbers and/or email addresses in order to facilitate contacting other members in the hope of hitting the trails together; or for emergency purposes. However, for privacy purposes, this would need to be accomplished in such a way that it would not be easily accessible by non-members. Because membership changes from year to year, increasing (hopefully!) from month-to-month during the season, the easiest way to do that—according to our web-master—is to post a member listing page on our website, *but without an actual link to the website*. In other words, the only way to access the list is to know of its existence—you cannot just go to our website and click on a link. I have taken the liberty of creating and posting the page—which members can access by typing the address line (see bottom of enclosed copy) into the Internet Explorer address field. If you have any questions, concerns or changes please let me know.

If you have any objection to having your name on the list **PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL ME TO LET ME KNOW** and I will remove it immediately.

*Dianne*

{ "If you have any objection to having your name on the (published member) list **PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL ME TO LET ME KNOW.** " }

**MEMBERSHIP AND TREASURER REPORT** — BRIAN CORKE

So far this season we are ahead of last year with 44 signed memberships and a good possibility of a few more to come. This number includes 4 associate members who belong to other clubs but ride our trails. Day passes are beginning to increase but, due to the unusual cold spell in December and the heavy accumulation of snow, many riders have been discouraged from using the trails. This should improve with better weather coming up and the ability to get more grooming done.

With a slight increase in memberships—and the usual support from our corporate sponsors— we should be in for another successful season of paying the bills and holding our own, barring any unforeseen expenses (i.e. groomer repairs, etc.)

The outlook for this season looks pretty good!

*BRIAN*

{ *"The outlook for this season looks pretty good!"* }



**BE ON THE LOOK-OUT.**  
*over the past year, Brian has encountered on our trails a wolf (last year) and a young moose (last week)! If you are lucky enough to encounter wildlife, please use caution and respect their rights to be there.*



## NORAC BASIC AMATEUR RADIO COURSE

March 9—April 27, 2000 (see schedule below)

The 2009 NORAC Basic Amateur Radio Course starts on Monday March 9th and finishes on Monday April 27 (Monday and Wednesday evenings).

All Classes begin at 7PM and last until 9:00 PM, with a 15 minute break at the halfway point. Classes will be held at the "People Place" 3402- 27th Ave Vernon BC.

Cost: \$100, includes basic study manual, complimentary NORAC 1-year Club membership, and final exam. There are no other costs, and the license is good for life (no renewal fees).

Schedule of class dates are:

Monday, March 9  
 Wednesday March 11  
 Monday March 16  
 Wednesday March 18  
 Monday March 23  
 Wednesday March 25  
 Monday March 30  
 Wednesday April 1  
 Monday April 6  
 Wednesday April 8  
 Wednesday Apr 15  
 Monday April 20  
 Wednesday Apr 22 (Review)  
 Monday April 27 (Exam)

Please contact Bill Crowther at 250-868-9970 (bfcrow@okanagan.net) for further information or to enroll.

**Note to VSA members: Please contact Dianne at 250-546-0980 (gevans3@telus.net) if you are interested in seeing a brief 10 minute presentation (showing how ham radio communications could benefit people that go into the back country) from Bill at our February Club meeting.**

## TAKE A FRIEND SNOWMOBILING—Ed Klim

(reprinted from the BCSF website)

Families across North America are changing their holiday and vacation plans, enabling them to stay closer to home and closer to family. Snowmobiling provides a growing number of families with the opportunity to vacation close to home, as a family. Families are staying closer to home, traveling and flying far less than in previous years and have a tendency to vacation and recreate close to or within their home state or province. The shift is profound and it can be realized when looking at the number of airline flights that have been cancelled, the empty cruise ships and the very quiet Orlando airport. Meanwhile, resorts that cater to snowmobilers, downhill skiers and other winter enthusiasts are reporting robust bookings with snow cover aplenty.

The snowmobile manufacturers have initiated a communications effort between the snowmobile community and CVBs, Travel and Tourism Bureaus, and Chambers of Commerce across North America. Each month this winter every Chamber and Visitor and Convention Organization will receive a special E-mail newsletter from the ISMA office, highlighting the positive aspects of snowmobiling to include the positive economic impact snowmobiling has on the region.

To help support that effort, we are sending positive news release stories and articles to over 4,000 daily and weekly newspapers throughout North America and are developing working relationships with editors and sports writers across the Snow Belt. We believe this extensive outreach to the general media creates positive working relationships for the entire snowmobile community. We are already receiving numerous inquiries on the positive economic impact of snowmobiling as well as the positive family social fabric that snowmobiling brings to the community.

Finally, the manufacturers have collectively initiated an extensive internet advertising campaign which has targeted non-snowmobilers and snowmobilers alike. If you have a computer, you should soon be seeing pop-up ads depicting fun family snowmobiling encouraging you and your neighbours to go snowmobiling. When you start to see the pop-up ads on your computer, let us know. Ride safe and enjoy the winter. Consider taking a non-snowmobiling friend snowmobiling during our special Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week – February 14, 22, 2009.

For more information on the Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week, please visit the Go Snowmobiling web site at

[www.gosnowmobiling.org](http://www.gosnowmobiling.org)



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Please contact Greg at 250-545-5364 for details

**03 MC900 151 RED/BLACK**

Features: Fresh top end last year – 6 rides. Cold air intakes, track guides  
Price: \$4,500

**07 M8 162 Sno Pro Orange**

Features: BoonDocker NOS (carbon fiber bottle), D&D y-pipe & single pipe, MBFP can, AC sno-pro airbox, KOSO EGT, clutching, adjustable Dalton weights, Boss Hi-rise seat, scratchers, skid plate, 3.5" pivot riser  
Price: \$11,000 Firm

**07 M1000 EFI 153 BLACK**

Features: Snow Eliminators, modified running boards with kick, Speedwerx y-pipe, scratchers, clutch vents, 2339 miles.  
Price: \$ 8,500 (financing available)

**08 F570 ARCTIC CAT GREEN \*NEW\***

Features: Fun & affordable all in one package! This sled utilizes Arctic Cat's popular new Twin Spar chassis with standard features like patented Diamond Drive gear case, electric start, and reverse - powered by our tried and true 570 fan cooled engine. Whether you're in the backyard, or the trails, you won't be disappointed.  
PRICE: \$8,399.00 REDUCED: \$7,399 (financing available)

**08 M1000 153 BLACK \*NEW\***

Features: Completely redesigned rear skid w/Fox Float Air Shock, running board clean outs, Arctic Cat Patented Diamond Drive gearcase w/reverse, 164 HP stock!  
Price: \$14,599.00 REDUCED: \$10,499 (financing available)

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**VERNON MOTORSPORTS**



**Woman Drivers!!!**

This morning on Hwy. 97, I looked over to my left and there was a woman in a brand new Cadillac, doing 120 km with her face up next to her rear-view mirror **PUTTING ON HER EYELINER**. I looked away for a couple seconds! And when I looked back she was halfway over in my lane, still working on that makeup. As a man, I don't scare easily. But she scared me so much, I **DROPPED MY ELECTRIC RAZOR** which knocked the **DONLUT OUT OF MY OTHER HAND**. In all the confusion of trying to straighten out the car **USING MY KNEES AGAINST THE STEERING WHEEL**, it knocked **MY CELL LPHONE FROM MY EAR**, which fell into the **COFFEE BETWEEN MY LEGS!**, splashing and burning Big Jim and the Twins, ruining my damn phone, soaking my trousers, and disconnecting an important call. **WOMEN DRIVERS!!!!**

## Actual letter to the Canadian Passport office

Dear Mr. Minister,

I'm in the process of renewing my passport, and still cannot believe this. How is it that Radio Shack has my address and telephone number and knows that I bought a TV. cable from them back in 1997, and yet, the Federal Government is still asking me where I was born and on what date. For Christ sakes, do you guys do this by hand?

My birth date you have on my social insurance card, and it is on all the income tax forms I've filed for the past 30 years. It is on my health insurance card, my driver's license, on the last eight goddamn passports I've had, on all those stupid customs declaration forms I've had to fill out before being allowed off the planes over the last 30 years, and all those insufferable census forms that are done at election times. Would somebody please take note, once and for all, that my mother's name is Maryanne, my father's name is Robert and I'd be absolutely astounded if that ever changed between now and when I die!!!!!! SHIT!

I apologize, Mr. Minister. I'm really pissed off this morning. Between you an' me, I've had enough of this bullshit! You send the application to my house, then you ask me for my f—— address. What is going on? You have a gang of Neanderthal assholes working' there! Look at my damn picture. Do I look like Bin Laden? I don't want to dig up Yasser Arafat, for shit sakes. I just want to go and park my ass on a sandy beach.

And would someone please tell me, why would you give a shit whether I plan on visiting a farm in the next 15 days? If I ever got the urge to do something weird to a chicken or a goat, believe you me, I'd sure as hell not want to tell anyone!

Well, I have to go now, 'cause I have to go to the other end of the city and get another f—— copy of my birth certificate, to the tune of \$60!!! Would it be so complicated to have all the services in the same spot to assist in the issuance of a new passport the same day?? Nooooo, that'd be too damn easy and maybe make sense. You'd rather have us running all over the f—— place like chickens with our heads cut off, then find some asshole to confirm that it's really me on the goddamn picture - you know, the one where we're not allowed to smile?! (f—— morons). Hey, you know why we can't smile? We're totally pissed off!

Signed - An Irate f—— Canadian Citizen



P.S. Remember what I said above about the picture and getting someone to confirm that it's me? Well, my family has been in this country since 1776 when one of my forefathers took up arms against the Americans. I have served in the military for something over 30 years and have had security clearances up the yingyang. I was aide de camp to the lieutenant governor of our province for ten years and I have been doing volunteer work for the RCMP for about five years. However, I have to get someone 'important' to verify who I am - you know, someone like my doctor WHO WAS BORN AND RAISED IN COMMUNIST f—— CHINA !!!

WWW.VERNONSNOWMOBILECLUB.COM



2008/09 VSA Executive

Vernon Snowmobile Association  
Box 504, Vernon, BC V1T 6M6

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Phone	Email
Gord Evans	President	Administration	250-546-0980	gevans3@telus.net
Dianne Evans	Director	Administration, Minutes, News-letters, Website, Marketing	250-546-0980	gevans3@telus.net
Doug Roehrig	Director	Grooming, Trails, Maps	250-545-3801 250-549-0973	chaletsnow@telus.net
Dave Smith	Director	Chalet Maintenance	250-306-4791	millionaireminded@hotmail.com
Kevin Hillier	Director-at-large		250-260-2830	kevinhillier@carsonair.com
Brian Corke	Treasurer, Director	Finance, Memberships	250-542-4782	