

LETTERS

Thanks for the Recognition

I have just read John Penido's Guest Comment, "Experts in the Field" in the November 1986 *jems* and would like to congratulate him on the excellent job he did in presenting a rather controversial issue. I totally support his viewpoint and am glad to see the assertive and positive steps taken by individuals such as himself in making his expertise known.

Many still believe, that the only person who can evaluate a paramedic's performance in a certification or recertification process is an MICN or base-station physician. It makes no difference that they are not EMS educators or have never used a KED, Hare traction, EOA, etc. Somehow, by osmosis or magic they have superior knowledge about how a skill should be performed by a paramedic. It's time we give credit where credit is due and it's time for paramedics to take the lead in their professions.

Sylvia Alverson, RN, CEN, B.S.
ALS Program Director
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Stop "Turf Wars"

I feel compelled to agree with most of what John Penido has to say in his Guest Comment, "Experts in the Field" (November 1986), about the virtues of the EMTP as a first-line responder in the field. Having started more than one IV under a truck by the side of the road, I concur that experience is more important than many kinds of book learning – and neither MD nor RN guarantees ability to make triage decisions without back-up facilities, or to make correct choices under grotesquely suboptimal conditions.

I would like to make a plea to end what I perceive to be "turf wars" going on in many states at this time. Nurses want their jobs and worry about paramedics in "their" EDs. Paramedics like job security too. In some states, we have efforts to make it illegal for nurses without prehospital certification to ride in ambulances – even on inter-agency transports. (I suggest that perhaps a critical care nurse would be an excellent attendant for a patient being transferred to a tertiary center from a community hospital.)

The person we all work for is not the doctor, the hospital, the ambulance company or the fire department. It's the man, woman or child on the guerny in our ambulances and our emergency

departments. And that man, woman and child need us all.

M. Lynn Baquie, RN, ARNP, CCRN, CEN
Ocala, FL

Pen Poisoning

The November 1986 *jems*, Tricks of the Trade ("Warm on the Inside") was very interesting. Even in South Florida we occasionally encounter a problem with cold IV solutions.

One thing in particular that I noted is the photograph of the IV solutions. The outside bag is marked with magic marker ink. Eight years ago my department along with the surrounding departments started this practice. It came to a halt after it was discovered that the ink from the marker would bleed through the outside bag into the IV bag itself and into the solution, thus contaminating the solution.

After this discovery, I wrote a letter to Travenol suggesting that they mark the contents on the outside bag in bold letters and advising them that it is very difficult in the field, to see through the outside wrapper. I have yet to receive a response from them or seen any progress in this matter.

A solution to this would be to write on a piece of tape then place it on the outside bag, careful not to place it where it would interfere with tearing the outside bag. This letter is not intended to be critical of another department's practice, but to inform others who read the article of the hazard of marking their bags in the same matter.

Richard S. Fedak
Police Fire/Medic
EMS Training Coordinator
North Palm Beach, FL

Dropped Paragraph in "Interface" An Embarrassment

In the December issue of *jems*, the Interface column entitled "Computer-Aided What?" by Jack Stout had portions of two paragraphs inadvertently omitted. Those two paragraphs, in their completed form, should appear as the first two complete paragraphs on page 90, beginning with "Theories aside . . .

Theories aside, the most effective initial SSPs developed to date were developed by people – not by computers. I believe that may always be true, and here's why. Although an initial SSP must be based mainly upon deductive reasoning, using the kind of information described above, later refinements to the SSP are based upon analyses of results and upon empirical testing of modifications to the plan. As we shall see, some of those modifications have nothing whatsoever to do with vehicle

Dutiful Dispatchers

I am writing a little late in reference to Avery Leonard's article "My Day with the Octopus," (June 1986) but the article was excellent! As a volunteer paramedic I am very fortunate to have had the experience of becoming familiar with the dispatchers in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The volunteer squad I run with makes it a point to schedule a tour of our dispatch center for all members once a year. There we have a chance to see the dispatchers at work. Your article states dispatchers must be able to do eight different things at once. It is so very true. Their job becomes much easier after they initiate the system to save lives if there is teamwork between dispatchers and EMS personnel.

With respect given to them by the volunteers even in trying times and respect given to the volunteers by the dispatchers, we have a great system. Keep up the good work, dispatchers.

Beth Coogan, Paramedic
West Norriton Ambulance
Norristown, PA

EMS Today Commended

Back in Holland again, I want to express the feelings of gratitude for the marvelous EMS Today East conference at New Orleans (sponsored by *jems*).

It certainly was refreshing to hear that the patients' interests stood in front and how the future is worked for in this respect. It was also nice again to meet old acquaintances and to exchange thoughts about patient care on both sides of the Atlantic.

Johan F. Letmaath
The Netherlands

replacement.

Even if it were possible to develop a complex algorithm for developing the initial SSP, taking into account such factors as traffic flow patterns (i.e., always be downstream from the area you're covering), typical demand levels and demand fluctuations, mutual aid arrangements with providers along the borders, timing of shift changes, access to freeways, railroad crossings and the times they are blocked, opening bridges, construction in progress, confusing street numbering systems in certain neighborhoods, the goal of eliminating extended delays rather than achieving a superficially impressive "average" performance, and dozens of other concerns . . . even if such a computer program could be developed, computerizing the prerequisite data would be extremely expensive, and in any given system the program would be used only once.

Jems regrets the error.