

# Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group Minutes

August 3, 1993

Attendance: Keith Conover, M.D., Betty P. Thomas, Michael S. Kuga, Patti Randa, Thomas Clemens, Don Scelza, Charles Kollar, Marc Rosenthal.

Meeting came to order at about 2030 hours. The secretary not being present, minutes of the last meeting were not read. Since neither the Chairman, Vice Chairman, nor Secretary were present, the meeting was run by the Treasurer (Betty Thomas) and the ASRC Reps (Conover and Kuga), as much as it could be said to be run by anyone.

Patti Randa, having met all the requirements, was voted from Probationary membership, granted last September, to Active Membership (not field qualified).

We informally discussed the past few weeks' missions: the Juniata County search, the New Sewickley township search, and the Laurel Caverns rescue that AMRG could potentially have been called for. We noted that AMRG, MED-SAR, Rescue 40, and C.A.E.S.A.R. (an active local search dog group) have tentatively established a cooperative agreement, at the request of John Libonati of C.A.E.S.A.R., who feels that as simply a field resource, C.A.E.S.A.R. needs to have overhead and other SAR management functions filled by the other local SAR groups. The agreement has been signed by AMRG, MED-SAR, and C.A.E.S.A.R., and is pending signature by Rescue 40. This will of course need to be approved by the ASRC Board of Directors but we doubt this will present a problem. The text of the agreement is as follows:

*Whenever CAESAR is called for a lost person search for a live subject, STATCOM will be contacted by CAESAR and will immediately contact AMRG, MED-SAR, and Rescue-40 to request the following:*

*"Two incident-staff-capable members from each team to respond to the scene, if available, to: (1) jointly provide a Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council Unified Command to manage the search, and (2) to coordinate with their respective teams to facilitate any additional resource requests by the Unified Command."*

We also noted a report in the local paper about a young man who set up a "zip-line," as he called it, at McConnell's Mill State Park. According to the paper, the sling from his seat to the carabiner on the highline broke, but according to a climber Keith and Betty met at the Mountain Dreams store, he had tied an overhand knot without a backup and this simply came untied under stress. Since we weren't called, we assume that local rescue personnel, who we've trained in the past, managed the rescue without difficulty. The short newspaper account mentioned that he was done with "zip-lines" but that he would be back in two weeks to rappel. Maybe we should be waiting at the bottom with a Stokes.

We discussed switching to a new paging system. Although the present company is better than the first company with which we had paging service, the system has been down during recent searches and is thus not serving our needs. Mike Kuga and Patti Randa are investigating and will attempt to arrange for us to switch to a company that has expanded 900 MHz coverage, a new block of telephone numbers which should decrease the number of wrong-number pages, and reputedly less down time.

We also discussed the need for fund-raising, and Rich Worst will be directed to reactivate his discussions with Thom Jones to come up with some projects for us.

We discussed our mutual strong desire to do like ~~SA~~AMRG does: to have a single number that can be called whenever a member wants to find out about a mission in progress or simply to find out if a mission is in progress. This phone could be, for example, at STATCOM. It would have an answering machine with an outgoing message telling, for example, that a mission has been concluded. It could be call-forwarded to the DO, and Thomas Clemens noted that this can even be done from a remote telephone with some systems. It was also suggested that if we can afford it we could set up a toll-free number like BRMRG has.

Mike Kuga says that Dave Knorr is no longer interested in serving as training officer, though there is some question about this from what others have said. Mike Kuga will check with Dave on this and get back to Chairman Owen Gormley on this.

Mike Kuga suggested we get rid of the Group's existing post office box. We discussed switching to another PO box downtown, but again there is a prob-

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**c/o Department of Emergency Medicine**  
**Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh**  
**1400 Locust Street**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219-5166**  
Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed  
Address Correction Requested

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lem of regular access to it. Another option was to having the mail address changed to the locker and having the mail delivered there by the Mercy Hospital mail service. We finally decided to establish a mail slot next to the Emergency Department doctor's mailboxes over the lockers in the Department of Emergency Medicine office at Mercy; this is open 24 hours a day, so it is accessible when people bring patients to Mercy by ambulance, or people can stop by Mercy for a few minutes to check the mail and simply use one of the 15-minute parking slots outside the Emergency Department. Keith will set up a mail slot with our name on it. See the return address for the new official Group address.

The major teaching points of our informal training session regarded technical aspects of VHF radios and pagers.

Meeting adjourned at about 2145 hours.

Respectfully submitted, Keith Conover for  
George Pry, secretary

**Upcoming events:**

**28 August (Saturday):** *Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference Board of Directors meeting*, Charlottesville, VA. Keith Conover, Charles Kollar, and Mike Yee are planning to attend; call Keith at 561-3413 if you'd like to go.

**2-6 September (Thursday-Monday):** Annual Caver's Old Timer Reunion, near Elkins, WV.  
*Eastern Region, National Cave Rescue Commis-*

*sion staff meeting* will occur at Chuck Hemple's house on Saturday, and *Eastern Region NCRC medical staff meeting and Pennsylvania ASRC medical meeting* will occur on Sunday, at the "Med Tent" (Medical Pavilion) at the OTR site.

**7 September (Tuesday):** *AMRG meeting*, 7:30 PM, Department of Emergency Medicine conference room, Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh.

**11 September (Saturday):** *Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council statewide meeting*. Call Keith Conover at 561-3413 if interested in attending.

**23-24 October (Saturday-Sunday):** *Basic Wilderness Rescue* class, Camp Soles (near Seven Springs in the Laurel Mountains) run by AMRG.

**6-7 November (Saturday-Sunday):** Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania sponsored *Wilderness EMT* class, Camp Soles (part I). Register soon if you wish to attend because the class was already half full in July.

**19-21 November (Friday-Sunday):** Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania sponsored *Wilderness EMT* class, Camp Soles (part II). Also *Wilderness Command Physician* class.