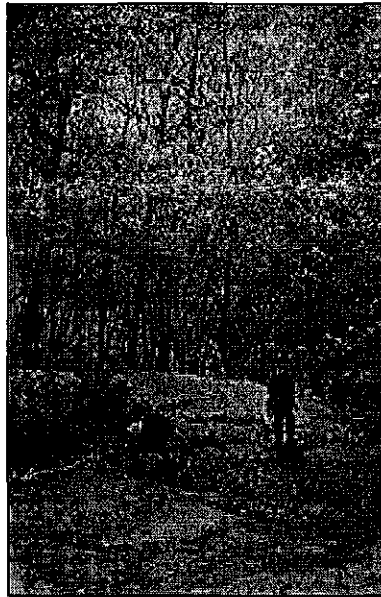


BRMRG Dispatch

Hails From the Chief

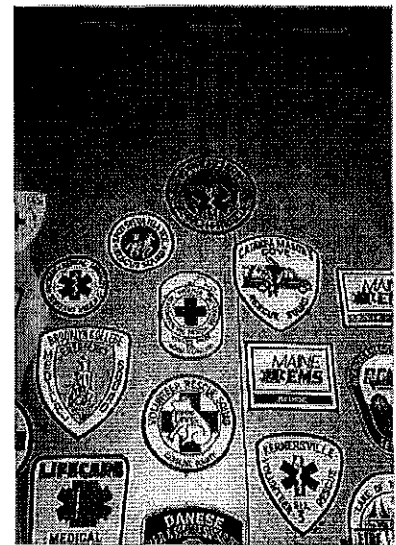
Hello...chances are that you haven't heard from us in a while. That's precisely why this newsletter exists. I'm Jason Dalton, this year's Chair for BRMRG and I want to welcome you back. No, you may not want to come out and slog through the mud anymore. You might not want to stay up all hours of the night driving to a search in some far off state or manning the phones in the locker for dispatch. But I'm willing to bet that you do still care as deeply about the group as you did back when you were an officer, an FTM, a trainee, etc. This is only my fourth year in BRMRG. I know there are those who have been here alot longer. One thing I've noticed is that the more things change the more they stay the same. I've often wondered how many people before me have sunk down to their knees in swamp mud, or had the press ask them questions that they knew they shouldn't answer. Searching itself probably hasn't changed much in the last 20 years for BRMRG, but the names and faces have and there have been some modifications along the way. I hope you find this newsletter interesting to read. Inside you will find stories from our members, reports from our officers, and a humorous anecdote or two. You might even see a bit of yourself in



SUGAR HOLLOW AFTER THE STORMS

these lines. Two years ago, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the ASRC. Folks flew to Charlottesville from as far away as California (Pam Platt) to join the festivities. There was good music, lots of people and a hot

tub to make the event complete. In other current events, the locker has now moved out of Peabody Hall to a sit on Rugby road. Newcomb Hall is being renovated and that is our temporary home.



So whether you were a member 2 years ago, or 20...welcome back. Let us know what you would like to see here and we'll try it in the next issue. Thanks!

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ① Training Report
- ② Search Stats
- ③ Finance Report
- ④ Upcoming Events
- ⑤ and more.....

A Word From the Training Committee

Let's face it. Teaching is for hams. We love the attention, the power of knowledge, the throngs of young initiates gazing at us with what-in-the-best-moments-boards-on-guru-like-devotion. Of course good SAR training has its long term benefits too. Good training has a tendency to ripple through an organization like bad gossip, inspiring new attitudes and fertilizing new ideas as it goes. To foster this wonderful effect, a few BRMRGers coalesced into a training committee and spent a fair bit of CPU time trying to sharpen, polish and hone the group's training into something special. They came up with three plans.

The first incantations from the committee cleared away the muddy waters between BRMRG's weekly training objectives and the ASRC's training standards. BRMRG's annual training schedule now comes with training session titles, dates, times, and the specific ASRC objectives that students will be proficient in after each class. So what's a good-hearted teaching ham to do? Well, instructors are as always encouraged to be creative in teaching their classes, but are expected to stick to the required ASRC objectives rather than covering pet topics a la cart. No money back guarantee included as yet, but we have top people working on it right now.

In early September, Beth Coyne and Jake Mazulewicz justified their graduate studies in educational psychology by holding the first annual trainer workshop and crawfish cookout for BRMRG. As the request for crawfish drew only raised eyebrows and resignations of disgust from local grocers, the training workshop was held without. The workshop leaders taught several trainers how to switch attitudes and thinking styles from the student's side of

the podium to the teacher's. They practiced what they preached using small group projects, directed discussions, and a little Indiana Jones to boot. Comments from the participants were unimpeachably positive and plans to take the workshop on the road to other SAR units are in process as I scribble.

Finally, the BRMRG sales and marketing division pulled quite a coup as a about 135 new Hoos shuffled into a physics auditorium on Monday 9 October for the annual BRMRG information session and slide show. Mit Robertson emceed the group which heard from among others, Lynn Reynolds, a former BRMRG search subject. Lynn's description of her search painted a glowing picture of BRMRG and will doubtless give us some high standards to continue aiming towards. Regrettably, the cast of ER was unable to attend the session this year. All 135 people were invited to the CQ workshop on Sunday 15th September amidst some comments roughly paralleling Roy Scheider's memorable line in Jaws wherein he said, "We're gonna need a bigger boat."

Jake Mazulewicz has been the land-nav Guru for this year's training class

When We Are Searching.....

One of the first questions a new trainee asks is how often does Blue Ridge Group Rescue Team (BRGRT????) get called out? After grimacing from our mangled, beloved acronym, we still have a hard time giving them an accurate answer. Every member has their theories, but over the past year and a half, we have begun to chart our callouts. In 1995 the ASRC was called out for 39 incidents. At the time of this article, 1996 has seen 29 requests. Although this data cannot be considered sufficient for statistical



Lauren Schiff shows her skills at Ascend- Descend at Raven's Roost during spring training

evaluation over time, there do appear to be a few trends.

A seasonal cycle is emerging from the response data. Searches have been sparse in winter and spring months, with a sharp increase during summer and fall. This may be due to weather anomalies or subject activities in the fall and summer months. Hunting season always brings about several fall searches (which mysteriously gravitate towards holidays). Breaks in bad weather also apparently send people for the woods. In 1995, we were requested for two searches in February and 1996 saw four searches in January that were completely isolated from other winter SAR activity. Poor weather has a similar effect; natural disasters such as flooding and

and implementing as yet another specialized response designation. Demand for such preparation and resources arose during the blizzard in the winter of 1996.

Technological advances may change the face of SAR. Global positioning systems or GPS have been experimented with and are a likely addition to the future of BRMRG. These systems provide a fast and effective means of attaining one's current position in lat/long coordinates. These coordinates are the ones used by Pegasus, the University of Virginia's medical airlift, and thus, would expedite the process of subject evacuation.

The Hug-A-Tree program has been flourishing. It is designed as preventative education for young children on the appropriate response if they find themselves lost in the woods. Ten presentations were made in surrounding counties this summer. The 25 year old slide show is thankfully in the process of being updated. Peter McCabe, a member of the ASRC, is developing a new program with similar objectives.

A new fundraising activity this year has been a 5 kilometer road race to benefit BRMRG. The race was on December 7th, 1996 in Charlottesville. The race was a tremendous success in terms of fun, excitement and publicity. Unfortunately, a freezing rain kept all but the most hard-core away that morning. We were pleased that such spirits were present though. We all know that it is much easier to sit at home eating donuts, but maybe the resiliency of BRMRG drew these people out into the cold. Some great looking T-shirts were made up for the runners and they all said they would be back next year!

FIRST BRMRG BABY!!

In the fall of 1986, Beth ventured into the BRMRG realm during her fourth year at the University. She met a third year student, Kevin, who had been in the group since his first year and was on the Board of Directors (BOD). After training together and going on many searches, they caught each other's eye and decided to try a new task-dating.

Beth graduated that spring and began work at Charter in Charlottesville, continuing her activity in the group. Kevin graduated and took a job in Portsmouth, VA while Beth stayed with the group until the summer of 1990 when they were married. After this point, they lived in the Chesapeake area and worked for four years before spending a single year in Washington DC-far removed from the BRMRG world. Happily, they returned to Charlottesville and BRMRG last year. Currently, they pursue graduate studies at the University.

Beth became quite round during training last spring and lo and behold during FTL testing on April 27th, 1996, she left early to "Run an errand." Several hours later, she had a glowing baby boy, Albert James Coyne. Four weeks early, but weighing in at a healthy six pounds, fifteen ounces, he was born a little after 12 a.m. on April 28th, 1996. BRMRG rejoiced at our new addition and promptly supplied the baby with field gear-from plastic carabiners to a tiny field pack and uniform shirt. Now, Albert is a constant presence at training. Beth even strapped him on as she lead field tasks during the CQ workshop in September. Furthermore, his tent-like contraption can be seen at nearly all of our vertical training. We are all convinced that he will know his alpha, bravo, charlies, long before he learns his ABC's.....

Jessica Bonnett is the BRMRG Records Officer and can't

decide whether or not Albert belongs on the roster.

From the Trenches

A new recruit gives his perspective from the front line....

As I reach over to make sure my perlon is properly secured around our venerable 20 year old Stokes litter, I feel the cold stab my belly. I never cease to be amazed at my steel carabiner's ability to conduct cold with the slightest touch. And in the early days of January, there's no lack of cold to conduct.

"Hello, my name is Justin Reich and I'm with the ASRC, and we need to g..."

"Hey," calls out a deep, southern drawl from the other end of the stokes, "Wut's tha Ay Es Ar Cee?"

"The ASRC is the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, You're name is Bubba, isn't it?"

I go on to explain to my team the nuances of Semi-Tech: the belayer's role; the commands; how to shield the patient from rocks; what to do when the patient vomits. And for Bubba's benefit I mention several times that quiet is imperative. So we get up the drainage in three pitches and head back down for three more. Then I switch off the litter to the rope team so I can stretch my legs running the line up the hill, and later clearing a path down for my team.

After another half dozen pitches, Bubba, aka Mit Robertson our Training Officer, calls a lunch break and we talk for a while about how we as a training class can improve our individual technique and our communication.

All of this and we still have plenty of pitches to do.

Justin Reich, an FTM-to-be thinks he has the creamy filling it takes to one day become a Base Twinkie.

blizzards create clusters of delayed searches. Two days after Hurricane Fran, the ASRC was requested for three incidents within a 24 hour period.

(see page 1 for FRAN evidence).

Spatial data has yet to be examined. However, BRMRG is taking an initiative to be proactive with our surrounding counties. Visits with the sheriffs department of eight surrounding counties are scheduled to discuss their SAR incidents and how we can better respond to their needs through training opportunities and/or tailored response. It will be interesting to see if this contact changes the locations and/or timeliness of our requests.

Look in future issues of the BRMRG Dispatch for historical analysis or callouts, subject categorization, and mapping of incidents! Search information can be found off the BRMRG homepage:
<http://www.virginia.edu/~brmrgr>

Lauren Schiff
serves on the BRMRG Board of Directors

Financial News

BRMRG's financial situation has radically changed over the past several years. With increasing support from the University, we have been able to purchase new equipment, upgrade and repair our current equipment, fund mileage for missions and training, maintain a pager net, cellular phone, and 800 number, and pay for extensive training throughout the year. BRMRG is approximately 62 percent self supporting, which means that while we are funded in part by the University, most of our funding comes from other sources, including fund-raisers, outside donations, and member donations.

This past year, our budget was approximately \$27,000, of which \$17,000 came from donations and fund-raisers, and \$10,000 from the University.

Some of the larger items that we have purchased in the past year include nine top of the line military grade Bendix/King radios, six new helmets, a new evacuation pack and 125 new topographical maps. Budgeted for the current year are several new ropes, vertical gear, medical gear, and nine new pagers. A generous agreement with Blue Ridge Mountain Sports will allow us to buy camping and climbing related equipment at wholesale prices (and BRMRG members get a 10% discount on their own purchases!)

While keeping our equipment and resources current is always a priority, we are also dreaming about new equipment and technology that could one day be a part of BRMRG. Imagine if every team went into the field with a GPS unit. What if the first team to a search responded in a fully equipped response vehicle? Could we get a new base radio that would carry us through any future changes in radio communication?

The response vehicle might be a few years off, but GPS and new radios don't have to be. We are also looking into purchasing a new copier, a new cellular phone, a split stokes, and a new printer.

Unfortunately these new purchases are not going to be squeezed out of student council. Recently, a group of members got together to start finding ways to turn our dreams into gear. We continue to have local fund-raisers like hosting bands at local restaurants and sponsoring a new 5K road race to benefit BRMRG, both of which were great successes. We have sent letters to companies like Cannon and Duracel asking if they might be able to spare a copier and a few batteries. We have already had success in receiving donations of equipment or services from Central battery, Metrocall, Sam's Club, Mobile Communications, and Rand McNally.

We have also decided to turn to our alumni and ask them for their support. Hopefully, they will remember the excitement of

searches, the camaraderie of training, and the opportunities they had for leadership and growth and support us as we try to expand as an organization while continuing to provide the safest, fastest, and most efficient searches we possible can.

Hopefully, the next time we write this column we will be able to tell you about all of the exciting new purchases we made!

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT THE NEW BRMRG HOMEPAGE YET?????

www.virginia.edu/~brmrgr

Go ahead, hit it.

Upcoming Events

BRMRG has a plethora of events and developments in the works. A cooperative response with Sugar Hollow is being considered. It would incorporate using a special pager code for full call-outs. The park would handle dispatch to allow a more rapid use of resources. Bob Koester has explored this area of the Shenandoah National Park and established pre-designated LZ's (landing zones) and evacuation routes in cooperation with the Park. FTM's and higher would be eligible to respond to such a call-out. This program is an exciting possibility for BRMRG.

There is a lively ongoing debate on BRMRG's role in disaster response. Recent flooding has brought to the forefront the possible need for a disaster qualification which would be for members (FTM and above) who have the proper equipment for both safe and effective searching in affected areas. PFD's (personal flotation devices), four wheel drive capability, cellular phone, and chain saws are among the items being considered for a response in flooded search areas. In the past, a winter response designation existed which the group is considering resurrecting