

## **Minutes of the 2009 NSS Vertical Section Board Meeting July 19, 2009**

The NSS Vertical Section Executive Committee held a meeting on Sunday, July 19, 2009 at a motel near the 2009 NSS Convention in Kerrville, Texas. Executive Board members present were Chair Dick Mitchell, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Boehle, At-Large Executive Members Miriam Cuddington, Terry Mitchell, and Bill Boehle (proxy for Brice Williams), Bruce Smith (proxy for Nylon Highway Editor Tim White), Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator Terry Clark, Education/Training Coordinator Bruce Smith, and Contest Coordinator Bill Cuddington. Vertical Section members Gary Bush and Ed Sira were also in attendance.

**Meeting opened** at 7:00 PM by Chair Dick Mitchell.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and deal with various issues that needed to be addressed before the annual business meeting on Thursday.

1. **Awards Committee** - Dick Mitchell reported that nearly all the service awards for past officers and other EC members have been sent out. Dick and Bruce Smith were given a round of applause in recognition of their extensive efforts to accomplish this feat. Terry Clark requested that the Awards Committee look into appropriate recognition for long time Vertical Workshop Instructors. Dick requested that Terry Clark submit the nominations to the Awards Committee for consideration.
2. **Vertical Techniques Workshop** - Terry Clark reported that 35-36 students were enrolled for the workshop on Thursday. He also said that he may need to order more instructor t-shirts during the coming year.
3. **EC E-mail List** - Terry Clark suggested that there should be other section members on the Executive Committee (EC) email distribution list. These members have provided continuing services to the Section and would benefit from being aware of ongoing issues being discussed by the EC and the EC would benefit from their input. It was agreed that an email distribution list for an EC Advisors Group be established to enable these members to participate in routine EC discussions. It was initially suggested that Lynn Fielding, Bart Rowlett, John Woods, Ed Sira and Gary Bush be included on this list. Confidential issues would continue to be circulated to EC members only, and only EC members may vote. A new list should be sent each year to all EC members to reflect any changes due to elections at convention.
4. **Climbing Contest** - Bill Cuddington reported that this year PMI donated two 600-foot lengths of rope for the climbing contest.
5. **Website** - Gary Bush (webmaster) discussed the section website. It was agreed that we need more content and should otherwise embellish the site. It was suggested we could add a photo gallery with more photos from past conventions, and a listing of past officers and EC members (based upon the list prepared for the Awards Committee). Ideas should also be solicited from the membership at the annual meeting.
6. **Nylon Highway** - Bruce Smith (acting as Tim White's proxy) raised the questions posed by Tim in his July 16, 2009 email:

... "I would like for the Board to continue the discussion regarding where the NH should be headed. We started this topic at the Sunday night Board meeting in 2008.

We all know that the golden days of SRT development are behind us. There are very few new techniques being developed that are of great relevance to cavers. (John Wood's article is one of the exceptions) While there are many techniques and new equipment being developed and modified for work access and rope rescue, very little of this is adaptable to the cave environment. Once, the NH was the venue where other disciplines came to research SRT, but rope access has moved on and developed its own set of skills and techniques.

I feel the NH should be for cavers. What does our audience need from us? What should we be offering them? I am open to your input.

I have been working with a couple of "gear nerds" on the idea of a regular equipment review column. Watch for this soon! I will continue to seek out appropriate article from the internet. I only wish to include those that have not been widely read and published elsewhere for easy access.

I believe one of the avenues of communication for the vertical caver is the On Rope! Forum of CaveChat.org. As NH Editor, I will continue to be the Moderator of that Forum and communicate with those who post there."

Gary Bush stated that we need to be more timely in getting articles out in the Nylon Highway. He is aware that Tim has some articles that he has not yet given to Gary for posting. It is important that we don't hold articles until we have a full issue. The purpose behind making the Nylon Highway an electronic publication was to avoid delays in timely distribution. The EC suggested that Gary push Tim for any articles he presently has ready for publication.

The subject of the future direction of the Nylon Highway and a request for articles will be raised to the membership at the Thursday meeting.

7. **By-Law Change** - Bill Boehle and Terry Mitchell have been working on a bylaw addition addressing parliamentary procedure and the conduct of e-meetings by the EC. The draft of this proposal had previously been circulated to the EC via email on July 6, 2009. Copies were also provided to the EC at the meeting. There had been some discussion via email and some further discussion ensued. Terry Clark made a motion that we adopt the proposed new bylaw #9 as proposed. Bruce Smith seconded the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously.

The adopted Bylaws change is as follows:

#### 9) PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY AND RULES OF ORDER:

- A. Meetings: Conduct of regular (face-to-face) meetings of the VERTICAL SECTION and of the Executive Committee (EC) shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, when it is applicable, and when it is not inconsistent with the VERTICAL SECTION CONSTITUTION, By-Laws, or Articles of Incorporation. To facilitate business in rare cases, the EC may decide to relax these rules of order, i.e. Suspend the Rules as provided for in Robert's Rules of Order itself. Special meetings may be conducted as necessary to conduct SECTION business.
  - i. The annual regular meeting of the VERTICAL SECTION at the NSS convention will be scheduled by the Chairman or the Executive Committee in coordination with the convention staff. Additional special meetings of the VERTICAL SECTION may be called by majority vote of the EC, or by the written request of 51% of the current SECTION members. Notice of the special SECTION meeting must be emailed and/or postal-mailed to all members no less than

30 days prior to the date of the meeting.

- ii. Regular meetings of the Executive Committee normally occur during the week of the annual NSS Convention. Regular or special EC meetings will be scheduled by the Chairman or may be called by three or more EC members.
- iii. Quorums: The quorum for a regular or special meeting of the VERTICAL SECTION shall be ten or more members. The quorum for regular or special meetings of the Executive Committee shall be a majority of the EC members.
- iv. Proxies: Proxies will be accepted at all meetings and may be counted for quorum purposes.
  - a. All proxy authorizations shall be in writing. Email proxies are acceptable. The authorization may designate alternate proxy holders by name, or by method of appointment, to serve if the named holder is absent.
  - b. A "specific proxy" as to a particular question must specifically identify that question and instruct the proxy holder to vote for or against the particular question or candidate, or specifically authorize the proxy holder to exercise his/her discretion regarding that particular question, or otherwise set forth a method to determine how to vote on that particular question (including, but not limited to, obtaining telephonic instructions).
- v. Minutes: A written record of the minutes of all SECTION and EC meetings shall be published annually in the VERTICAL SECTION's on-line publication, the NYLON HIGHWAY.

B. Special Rules of Order for the conduct of business by email:

- i. The Executive Committee may decide to hold special meetings by email, hereinafter referred to as "e-meetings", as necessary to conduct SECTION business at other times throughout the year.
- ii. E-meetings may be called either by the SECTION Chair or 3 or more members of the Executive Committee.
- iii. E-meetings will take place using the process outlined below.
- iv. Each e-meeting shall address one issue only. If additional issues need to be addressed, a separate meeting for each issue shall be called.
- v. The e-meeting shall be chaired by the SECTION Chair. If the SECTION Chair is unavailable, the meeting chair shall be the Secretary/Treasurer, unless another Executive Committee member is designated by the SECTION Chair to act in that capacity for a specific meeting. The meeting secretary (MS) shall be the Secretary/Treasurer unless otherwise designated by the meeting chair.
- vi. The rules applying to the conduct of regular meetings shall also apply to e-meetings with the following exceptions:
  - a. The Motion to Table rule shall be suspended for 72 hours (3 days) immediately following the announcement of the start of the discussion period by the meeting chair. Following the suspension period, any Motion to Table brought forth shall be disposed of within 48 hours (2 days).
  - b. The motion to Call the Question rule shall be suspended and replaced with the rules in Items (vii) e, f and g below.

- vii. The order of business shall be as follows:
  - a. The SECTION Chair shall send a notification to all the EC members stating the reason for calling the e-meeting and providing an outline of the issue to be discussed. The SECTION Chair should also state in the notification if another EC member will be designated to act as meeting chair and/or MS for the meeting. The meeting shall not begin until the meeting chair has received acknowledgement of the meeting from a quorum of EC members. The meeting chair will make an additional attempt by telephone to contact all EC members who have not acknowledged the meeting within a reasonable period of time.
  - b. The notification from the SECTION Chair shall contain a unique subject line identifying the topic of the e-meeting. This unique subject line shall be used in all communications related to this e-meeting to aid in tracking. Any EC member sending a public communication relating to an e-meeting must send it simultaneously to all EC members.
  - c. Motions shall be presented, seconded and opened for discussion by following the same rules and procedures followed in regular meetings with the exceptions noted above.
  - d. Once a motion has been seconded, the meeting chair shall then start a discussion period which shall be open for a minimum of 5 days.
  - e. At the end of the discussion period, unless the Executive Committee votes to extend the discussion or call the question sooner, the meeting chair shall then start the voting period by submitting the motion to a vote by the members. The voting period shall be open for a minimum of 4 days or until the number of returned votes is sufficient to determine the outcome of the vote. Any votes submitted during the discussion period cannot be counted - the member must submit the vote again during the voting period.
  - f. Each voting member shall send his/her vote to all members of the Executive Committee. The MS shall tally the votes and announce the results at the end of the voting period along with a list showing the vote of each member. If a motion to hold a secret ballot had previously been passed, each voting member shall send his/her vote only to the meeting chair and the MS. The MS shall then announce only the results of the vote.
  - g. Once the voting results are announced, the meeting chair shall declare the e-meeting closed.
  - h. A written record of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes of the e-meeting.

- 8. **Approval of E-Meeting Minutes** - It was discussed that the EC needs to formally approve the minutes from the EC meetings that were held in the preceding year. These minutes were previously circulated via email to all EC members on June 24, 2009, with copies distributed at this meeting. Terry Mitchell made a motion to approve the EC minutes as distributed. Bruce Smith seconded the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously. The approved minutes will be published in the Nylon Highway.
- 9. **Education** - Bruce Smith (Education Coordinator) reported that the updated Basic Vertical Training Student Manual and other course materials are now posted on the VS website in PDF format, and that the Intermediate SRT Training Course is also posted in PDF format.
- 10. **Membership** - Bruce Smith suggested that the Section needs to get its name out there as a means of bolstering our membership. He stated that there are many vertical cavers out there who don't

participate in our activities and who could support our mission. He suggested that we investigate the cost of running ads in the NSS News.

11. **Need For A Vice-Chair** - Bruce Smith previously raised (in an email) the issue of whether the Section needs a Vice Chairman to take over for the Chairman in the event that person is unavailable to conduct business. The consensus was that such a position should be created. The point was brainstormed to identify the options available for us to consider. They included:

- a. Add a new board member since the Chair does not normally vote except when there is a need to break a tie. Adding one would still keep the number of regular votes odd.
- b. Make the three appointed board members able to be elected internally and assume the office of the Vice Chair.
- c. The Secretary/Treasurer could temporarily assume the Chair's role in the Chairman's absence. and
- d. Similar to the Chairman, the position could be filled by one of the existing four At-large EC members. It was noted that a constitution and bylaws change would be needed to make any change to the number of the officers. It was decided that Terry Mitchell and Bill Boehle would consider the suggestions made and draft proposed language for consideration of the EC.

**Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn was made and carried.  
Time of adjournment was approximately 9:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bill Boehle

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