

2014 Vertical Section Business Meeting

July 16, 2014

Choral Room, Lee High School, Huntsville, AL

1. **Call to Order:** VS Chairman Terry Mitchell called the meeting to order at 10:06 am. There were 26 members in attendance.

2. **Approval of minutes** from last year's meeting, Aug 7, 2013; Approved as published.

3. **Officer Reports.**

A. **Chairman's Report:** Terry Mitchell said there were errors in the Convention Program concerning times for the week's vertical events, and that schedule changes had been published in the Daily Bulletin.

B. **Treasurer's Report:** Ray Sira reported the VS has three bank accounts with a total balance right now of \$11,588.51. He discussed several items of income and expense during the past year. Treasurer's Report copies will be available soon.

C. **Secretary's Report:** Ray said we have approximately 300 registered members.

D. **Editor's Report:** Tim White said there are few technical articles in the "Que", that will be sent to Gary Bush for upload to the Nylon Highway in the following weeks. Tim said he is also the online editor of the Cave Chat forum, titled "On Rope", and in both jobs he is continuously monitoring for safety protocols.

4. **Committee Reports.**

A. **Climbing Contest Coordinator:** Bill Cuddington;

Bill expressed thanks for rope donations from PMI, climbers, and for the gym facilities. He does not yet have the exact number of climbing participants Monday & Tuesday, but will send that information later via email. The approximate number ranges between 50-60, and 6 or 7 records were broken.

The Awards Ceremony will be Friday Noon in Room 150. Prizes will have to be claimed in person. If you cannot come please remember to have someone come pick it up for you. Miriam Cuddington said she needs to order new award certificates.

B. **Rebelay Workshop:** Gary Bush said there were not a significant number of participants Tuesday, and the majority of time was spent "redialing" equipment. A good time was had by all.

C. Vertical Techniques Workshop: Interim Workshop Coordinator John Woods was not present, but he sent word that Instructors and other Helpers should meet at 10am Thursday in the Gym, with the participants arriving at 11am.

D. Education Coordinator: Bruce Smith said he has been working on improvements to the Basic and Intermediate vertical course. He said he has not received a significant amount of feedback, or participation. He feels there is not a lot of involvement or acceptance of the vertical section teaching skills, rules, and or regulations, and that grottos are modifying our courses. He said we may need to leave pushing of adherence to these published techniques to the NSS leadership.

Several suggestions were offered to Bruce from the membership:

- ❖ Idea from Bill (??): Perhaps have a vertical training session during conventions for grotto educators to ensure they are qualified.
- ❖ Suggestion from Tim White: May need to do this on a more regional level because not all NSS members participate in the NSS conventions.
- ❖ Suggestion from audience member: Agreeing that actual NSS convention may not be the best location for education training for instructors, and would be more successful on a more regional scale.

E. Awards Committee Chairman: Bruce Smith presented service awards to former Secretary-Treasurer Bill Boehle for his service 2004-2013, and to Jenny Clark, widow of former Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator Terry Clark, for Terry's service in that position 2000-2013.

Chairman Terry Mitchell announced that the VS had donated a brick at the new NSS Headquarters building in memory of Terry Clark, and he presented Jenny with the letter and certificate from the NSS acknowledging that donation. It will be brick number 251.

F. Bylaws Committee: Terry Mitchell reported that the Bylaws Committee (he and Bill Boehle) had prepared an amendment to Bylaw 4.(E) Vacancies, to address the inadequacies that had come to light upon the untimely death of Terry Clark last October.

The proposed amendment provides detailed procedures for filling Officer and other EC vacancies that may occur during the year between section meetings without having to wait until the next annual election. This bylaw amendment was approved by the Executive Committee July 13, 2014.

G. Symbolic Items: Bill Boehle reported that he restocked in late 2013 and had to raise most of the retail prices. The big selling items are T-shirts and sweatshirts. The pins he ordered in 2013 were a significant expense but the return should eventually equalize regarding profit margin. Sweatshirts are on sale for S and M sizes.

H. Web Page: Gary Bush reported that the VS web page is up to date now. However, more pictures are always needed and welcome. The price changes for symbolic items will be listed on the Web page and be kept as up to date as possible.

I. **Out Reach Committee:** Jon Schow was not present, so Terry Mitchell read Jon's emailed report: "**Currently there are 266 people who have liked the vertical section Facebook page. I'd like to start sharing interesting stories about vertical trips, learning, teaching, and so forth.**"

Terry added that his personal opinion is that "*Public outreach is going but it is not going fast.*" He suggested publications on the webpage, in the Nylon Highway, and the NSS news.

5. **Old Business:** NONE.

6. **New Business:**

A. **Volunteer needed to be the new Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator.** Peter Hertl suggested Terry Zornes, a "top flight vertical guy," or Kurt Waldron, who is interested but wants more information about the job. Terry Mitchell and Peter agreed to talk to Kurt later this afternoon. **NOTE: Later that day Terry and Peter did talk to Kurt Waldron about the position and Kurt agreed to accept it.**

B. **Transportation and Storage of the Vertical Workshop equipment.** Jenny Clark had brought the equipment to Huntsville this year, but in the absence of a new Workshop Coordinator, we aren't sure what to do with it following the workshop on Thursday.

Tim White comments: Terry Clark always transported the equipment, but now we need to figure out how we are going to coordinate the equipment transportation in the future.

Suggestions From the Crowd: Store the equipment at the NSS headquarters and have it transferred up.

Chairmen Terry Mitchell suggested that we wait and see who will be the next Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator, and if we do not have one by the end of the week, the issue will be addressed by the executive committee on Friday. **NOTE: On Friday July 18, Kurt Waldron assumed custody of the equipment and took it home with him.**

Jane Mitchell said we need to reimburse Jenny Clark for equipment transportation. It was pointed out that we have been doing this for the past few years, and the issue was referred to the Secretary-Treasurer.

C. **A suggestion from the crowd** was made to increase the participant fee for the Vertical Techniques Workshop: Former Treasurer Bill Boehle said that there would not be a significant need for a price increase right now.

7. **Elections:**

A. **Secretary-Treasurer (1-year term):** Ray Sira was nominated for another term. There were no other nominations. A motion was made and carried to suspend the rules, and Ray Sira was elected by unanimous consent.

B. **Two "At-Large" Executive Committee Members (2-year terms):** Terry Mitchell and Mike Rusin were nominated for the two positions. Peter Hertl was nominated but declined. The rules were again suspended, then Mike and Terry were re-elected by Unanimous Consent.

8. **The Business Meeting was Adjourned at 11:24am.** The Chairman asked everyone to reconvene in 10 minutes for the **Vertical Session.**

The Vertical Session began at 11:35, 7/16/2014, in the Choral Room

1. **Opening Remarks.** Chairman Terry Mitchell reported that during the break the elected members of the Executive Committee, consisting of himself, Mike Rusin, Bill Boehle, Miriam Cuddington, and Ray Sira, had met briefly to elect the coming year's Chairman, Vice Chairman, and the Appointed Positions on the EC. These are all 1-year terms of office.

Terry said that he has been re-elected to another term as Chairman, and Miriam Cuddington has been re-elected as Vice Chairman. Bill Cuddington was re-appointed as Contest Coordinator, Bruce Smith was re-appointed as Education Coordinator, and Tim White was re-appointed as Editor. The position of Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator was still temporarily vacant.

NOTE: A very short VSEC meeting was conducted Friday, July 18, 2014, to formally appoint Kurt Waldron as the Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator.

2. **The Vertical Session** was chaired by Bill Cuddington:

A. Bruce Smith - Demonstration of the OR1 Goliath seat harness and how to shorten the waist band beyond its apparent limit. Bruce said this adjustment is little understood.

B. Bill Cuddington- Discussions on heat training and preventing over-heating during rope ascending.

C. John McCrary - John is the owner of PANGAEA Vertical Caving Systems in Vinemont, AL; email rocjoc8@yahoo.com. John demonstrated an improved Double Bungee Ropewalking System that he has developed from a specialized racing system. It is tuned for efficient rope racing and he claims it is a better system for vertical caving as well. Among other refinements, the system includes a hydration bladder in a small Camelback pouch attached to the back of the chest harness.

3. **The Vertical Session Adjourned at 12:01pm.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Sira, Vertical Section Secretary-Treasurer

June 16, 2015