



## CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS NOTES

ASRC General Membership Meeting, October 3, 2020

### *ASRC's Founding Myth:*

- See <http://archive.asrc.net/2016-11-04-ASRC-Early-History-draft-0.4.pdf>
- ASRC started organizing in 1972, incorporated in 1974 by Rita Cloutier, Ray Cole, Gene Harrison and me, at urging of and as outgrowth of Potomac Appalachian Trail Club in DC, but not officially affiliated with PATC.

### *ASRC is Unique*

- Sort of like NASAR, MRA, and state SAR Councils: a federation of SAR groups, in the ASRC's case across five states
- But, more tightly-linked Groups: we work together more tightly than any of those other associations
- Unlike NASAR, MRA, or state SAR Councils, we have the same training standards, the same rigorous credentialing, and the same uniform.

### *ASRC Structure*

- The ASRC is composed of Groups-with-a-capital-G (regardless of the name of the team) which are headquartered in a local area within the five states in which we operate. Group members are also members of the ASRC and entitled to vote within the ASRC; each Group elects Representatives ("reps") to the ASRC Board of Directors, which is where some of the governing of the ASRC takes place. We have Board of Directors meetings quarterly, mostly virtual online these days, but even before Covid, sometimes online.
- We also have a whole org-chart of ASRC-level officers including the Conference Training Officer, Conference Operations Officer, Information Technology Officer, and various committee chairs. Committees and ad-hoc groups of ASRC members from across the Conference work together on projects.
- In order for our Groups to not be "self-certifying" (which government agencies see, reasonably, as a potentially bad thing), we have an independent ASRC Credentialing Board that takes the officially-published (and much argued-over and famously very high quality) *ASRC Training Standards* established by the ASRC Board of Directors and uses them to create both written and practical tests for ASRC members, both for field credentialing and for Search Manager credentialing. Over the past couple of years we've worked very hard to change and upgrade those training standards, and now have a system that includes conference-wide written (online) testing, skills and other checkoffs in what's called a PTB (Position Task Book), and practical testing. This changeover is complete, and Groups are now starting to implement the new procedures and members are being credentialed at the various Field levels.
- The field training levels we have are:

- **Field IV:** used be called Callout Qualified (CQ): just enough knowledge and equipment to participate in on-the-job training during searches and rescues but always under close supervision.
- **Field III:** the first half what we used to call field team member (FTM): enough to, without close supervision,
  - participate in search tasks without close supervision
  - lead simple linear search tasks along a trail or a stream
  - run a nontechnical evac (no ropes needed), and
  - serve as a litter bearer or a haul team member for a semi-tech evac (low angle rope rescue).
- **Field II:** the second half of what we used to call field team member (FTM): enough to:
  - lead teams on complex search tasks including difficult navigation and cross-country travel, and
  - rope team belaying or lowering a semi-tech evac (low angle rope rescue).
- **Field I:** what we used to call field team leader (FTL): enough to:
  - apply a deep understanding of leadership principles to lead a large team,
  - lead field teams on search tasks that challenge the team physically and emotionally, such as a long-duration task or one with many untrained volunteers, and
  - rig and supervise a steep semi-tech evac (steep low-angle rope rescue), including using a Radium load-releasing hitch to switch from raise to lower and from lower to raise; and to use a Münter hitch when other alternatives are not available.

*Great Moments in ASRC History (lots of them, including the Dolly Sods Jacob Allen search, but these are two of my favorites):*

Shaun Crawford search and rescue:

- See <http://archive.asrc.net/ASRC-Operations/1983-10-12-Crawford-Rescue-Washington-Post.pdf>
- <http://archive.asrc.net/ASRC-Operations/1983-10-14-Old-Rag-Press-Release.pdf>
- Got plaques with nice commendation from the director of the National Park Service for this.

Flying in a C-130 to Mount Rogers:

- Search in the Mount Rogers Wilderness Area in SW Va
- 72-year old high school coach separated from his wife while hiking along the Appalachian Trail in dense fog
- Took several days to find and rescue him
- AMRG and SMRG and BRMRG got to ride in back of a C-130, with a couple of our vehicles, found him and rescued him (he was almost out) and the Air Force even gave us a ride back
- Story about what happened on the way back.

*World-Class Excellence within the ASRC:*

- Victoria Airey in cave rescue
- Ken Chiacchia in the interface of search theory and practice
- Lee Fuell in leadership and rigging/technical rescue
- Gene Harrison in vertical rope techniques, communications and cave rescue
- Heather Houlahan in canine search
- Bob Koester lost person behavior and search management
- Patty Lindsay in applying her IT expertise to remote support for searches
- Bru Randall in cave rescue
- Chris Ruch in technical and mountain rescue

- Don Scelza in search management
- Steve Weiss in knot topology, search management and the Incident Command System
- Carl Werntz in radio communications and public health/risk management for SAR

### *Mentors and Leaders (much the same)*

By acting as mentors, ASRC members help other develop their skills. Their students go out and do SAR and mentor others and thus multiply the original mentor's efforts.

- Dan Patterson of MARG mentors in a host of field techniques including teaching technically complex rigging, knots, navigation, map reading and survival skills
- Rebecca Hostetter of MARG in mentoring decades' worth of ASRC members in all SAR skills
- John Rogowski of AMRG mentors the entire gamut of SAR skills, leveraging his expertise as a firefighter and paramedic
- Matt Benson and Chris Ruch of AMRG who mentor the entire gamut of SAR skills including high-angle rescue and winter snow and ice rescue
- Gregg Wavle of MSAR, who has been nominated to the Board for an Outstanding Achievement Award, who in the words of MSAR's Kyle Rhoderick, "has been a valued member of Maryland Search & Rescue for over 9 years and during his tenure he became a Field Team Leader. In addition, he currently is chair of the MSAR board as well as being active on various workgroups, including the grants workgroup and governance workgroup. Gregg became the board chair during a difficult time for MSAR but with a calming leadership and a lot of hard work, the team is now heading in the right direction."
- LuAnn Gatti of Northwest, who over the past five or six years has tirelessly labored to make the ASRC a better organization particularly as far as her work with the Credentialing Board, and who I plan to nominate for ASRC Board Vice-Chair, which is a position understood to be an understudy position for later becoming Chair.
- Now I would like to recognize some ASRC members for stick-to-it-ness in the form of our Years of Service Awards, who get a certificate and a spiffy ASRC lapel pin mailed to them:  
[Read list of YOS awards]
- And now, open mike time, anyone else want to chime in with recognition of ASRC members whose work you want to recognize?
- [regain control if needed and continue] ...

### *Servant Leadership*

Servant leadership is the idea that leaders *serve the needs of their subordinates*. For more about it, see <http://www.conovers.org/ftp/AppSAR/AppSAR-4-Leadership.pdf>.

They endure the frustrations of being in a contentious democratic organization and put in enormous amounts of time. This includes Group officers, ASRC Board reps, members of the ASRC Credentialing Board, and ASRC officers.

By making the organization work, and improve they leverage their time and expertise to help others save lives.

We need to particularly single out Victoria Airey, the ASRC Treasurer-for-Life, who has served in this leadership position for I-have-no-idea-how-many years.

And particularly Kathy Lamb who has served as Secretary for the past several years, and Stephen McClanahan who has volunteered to take over from her as of today. (That is, presuming the Board of Directors votes to accept him; I will note that anyone voting against him **will be nominated** for the Secretary position). In particular, the Secretary role is particularly suited to be called "servant leadership."

## *Democracy*

Right after World War II, Winston Churchill said,

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those *other* forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Speaking of democracy, I highly recommend Pulitzer Prize Winner Anne Applebaum’s summer 2020 book, *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*.

I don’t know if you’ve heard of her, but Anne Applebaum is our leading historian/political scientist/philosopher as regards totalitarianism. She is an American who lives in Poland and is now under a totalitarian regime in Poland very like that of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, where a journalist who criticizes the government’s Covid-19 management can be arrested and, in a non-independent court controlled by Orbán, be sentenced to five years in prison. Last year, this was a big concern for me, as my outspoken 20-year old daughter was doing a semester abroad at McDaniel College’s sister campus in BudaPest (pronounced buda-pesht) in Orbán’s Hungary. Luckily, she returned to the US safely at the end of the semester.

Applebaum is a direct intellectual successor to Hannah Arendt. Arendt, like Applebaum, is Jewish. She lived in a democracy in Germany that was taken over by the Nazis; she escaped Germany and then the Nazi occupation of Europe to New York by the skin of her teeth. Eerily similar to Applebaum’s experience.

Here is a quote from her book directly applicable to the ASRC:

*Democracy itself has always been loud and raucous, but when its rules are followed, it eventually creates consensus.*

Speaking of which, the main agenda item for the AGM is to discuss and vote on revising the Bylaws. It may be confusing and tedious, it may be loud and raucous like revising the Training Standards but for these and other ASRC self-improvement projects, I am sure that in the end we will achieve consensus and better ourselves.

As we are dealing with the necessary complications of the Bylaws vote, I want to point out that one of the duties of the Chair at each ASRC General Membership Meeting (AGM) is to provide a report of all of the actions of the Board of Directors since the last General Membership Meeting (AGM). Rather than boring you with it, while we wait for the Secretary to tally the votes for the Bylaws and announce the result, I will post a link to it in the chat and you can either (a) take a look at it right now, or (b) take a bathroom break and then come back and take a look at it.

Once the AGM is concluded, we will take a break and then move directly into the Board of Directors meeting.