



BRMRG DISPATCH

April 1999

Inside this issue:

Finance	2
Commo	2
Training	3
Reflections	3
Search Log	4
Nifty Awards	4

From the Chair

By Brian Ulmer

I arrived at UVA four years ago with the same uncertainties that every first year student must face. What classes should I take? What am I going to do with my life? How should I spend the time I have away from classes and studying? A week later I discovered the Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group and the answers to these questions became a little more clear. It didn't take long for me to realize that I had stumbled across something special. BRMRG has enriched my life, the lives of its members, and the greater community in ways I never thought possible.

Each year the group grows stronger and I am always amazed at what we can accomplish. BRMRG started the year with an outstanding training class. Our trainings have been second to none thanks to the hard

work of our training officer and our many members who donate their time to teach. As of March, we have fifteen new FTM's and expect many new FTL's come spring. My term as chair will be over and a new set of officers will soon lead the group into the coming year, the 25th anniversary of BRMRG. I would like to thank all BRMRG members, past and present, for their contributions to the group. The hard work and friendships forged will never be forgotten.

Special points of interest:

- ♦ This coming year's big project will be BRMRG Y2K readiness.
- ♦ April brought a sighting of William Dixon and he brought us a lava lamp for the locker.
- ♦ Jenn Avery-Whitaker is back in town starting this summer!!!!
- ♦ Mit Robertson done got hitched! The lucky lady was Liz Gammon, a Scottsville love affair brought to fruition...

The BIG MOVE

The BRMRG locker will relocate yet again.

UVA is building a large underground library underneath the space where the admissions building, Miller Hall currently stands. Therefore the admissions offices must relocate and they have chosen to place themselves in Peabody Hall, the building we all call home. So once again we are off to carve a new home for ourselves in the vast wastelands of UVA's basement spaces. Hua!



Thank you Lauren Schiff for doing so much stuff for BRMRG. Make sure you check out all of Lauren's work on the web page:

<http://brmrg.med.virginia.edu>

Follow the links to the new BRMRG Alumni Database.

Special Investigator

I bring you news of another stupendous year in the world of finance with much bill paying, equipment purchasing, and mileage reimbursement. BRMRG finds itself financially sound, but as always doing our best to be ready and able to provide for the many financial needs of the group. As always your generous contributions are really what makes this possible.

We have begun the establishment of a BRMRG Alumni Association to protect the summer funds from the ever-pesky Student Council. Thanks to Jenn, Lauren, and Jason Dalton for their help and support.

This year in Finance has required some interdisciplinary work by the finance officer. As some of you may know, there was a University Judi-

ciary case filed against BRMRG by Corks and Curis, the university's yearbook group, for the accidental damage we caused to their \$500 copier. This was an unfortunate incident, but actually rather amusing. I believe this is the first year that BRMRG has been accused of violating a University Standard of Conduct. Based on my one year of judiciary experience I was placed in charge of this scandal and given the alias, Special Investigator Olivetti. The trail went off successfully and we were sanctioned to pay for half of the copier, what we had originally offered Corks and Curis before they brought us up on charges.

Otherwise things are going smoothly and we thank you again, from the bottom of our field packs, for your thoughts and generous contributions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Over the course of the past year, the communications side of BRMRG has continued to be the most dynamic and exciting aspect of search and rescue. The repeater, after many months of neglect, found itself relaying vital radio signals in the mountains of Southwestern Virginia this year. Hundreds of AAs and AAAs have cycled through our communication equipment. Our equipment is better protected during transport than ever before. Our WPEZ Emergency Medical Radio license is currently being renewed for another five years.

Alright, so commo may not thrill the soul, but it has steadily continued to play its critical role in our

operation. The groups of the ASRC are becoming increasingly harmonized in the execution of communication procedure and BRMRG's training class is becoming a group of professional and competent radio handlers. I hope to see a growing interest in the field of communications over the course of the year.

"Commo may not thrill the soul..."

Steve Vanderoff is no Commo Geek.

Training Tidbits

BRMRG is about to bring to a close one of its most successful training years ever. Promotions have been fast and furious this year, and this training class has been one of the most dedicated and competent classes in years. Training attendance regularly surpasses twenty people and nineteen people tested in the fall to become FTMs. The addition of members from VMI in Lexington has added to the size and success of this year's class.

The backbone behind a great training year has been the admirable efforts of this year's cadre of instructors. Numerous classes have been redesigned and rewritten with noticeable results. The hard work of the

instructors has consistently shined through. Through the creation of a Training Binder, their efforts will be of great benefit to future classes of BRMRG CQ's.

Overall, BRMRG will have the pleasure of looking back on a very productive year of training.

Training does thrill the soul.....

Justin Reich, this year's training officer, will now be serving as BOD chair for 99-00.

Words from a Recruit

As my roommate surveys the mess of the slightly more than ten essentials scattered on the floor of our room while giving me strange looks while I practiced tying an ASRC seat harness around my hips, she shoots me a dubious expression that reads, *"What have you gotten yourself into?"* Basically it was sweeping down a street for an elderly woman in Newport News or a ten-year-old boy in Fairfax County during unholy hours when most were asleep. It meant working with some of the most amazing and dedicated people, volun-

teers who sacrificed sleep, school, and whatever else to help save someone's life. Most importantly it meant serving my community in a unique way, getting actively involved whether it meant walking with a dog-handler near the AT, sneaking around people's backyards, or dispatching for the Manassas downed-aircraft search. On a small note, BRMRG definitely made my first-year of college exciting and memorable.

Naz Ahmed is our new intelligence officer. Go Figure

WORDS FROM A GRADUATE

Two years ago William wrote a rather lengthy email to the group about what he had learned from search and rescue. That email really made me think about what I was learning, and I wanted to write something along those lines. Now my experience has been quite different, and much shorter than his was, but then everyone has their own experience.

I joined BRMRG as a first year with about a hundred other people. I got FTM but then after winter break I got sick of having to do stuff every freaking Wednesday evening and Saturday morning. The fraternity scene was new to me and I wanted to check it out, so that often meant getting home around 4 or 5 in the morning which made doing semi-tech in the rain at 9 the next day not so appealing. At any rate, I dropped out for a couple of months. When I started attending again, I realized that only Jason and Brian were left from my original training class. For some reason I got motivated enough to become finance officer and get FTL that year. I remember my first search as an FTL, not really knowing too much. On a pretty high profile search I took a bunch of family members into a low probability area where I promptly lost the map. The task was pretty easy and I remembered the map, so I was able to finish without them catching on.

At the end of my second year I got on the BOD

but by default kept doing finance. Then at some point I finally took MSO and SOS and became IS. I took the courses about two years late because I wanted to be an FTL for more than a few months, but mostly because the classes always conflicted with camping trips to the Adirondacks. You have to have your priorities in life.

So that is my history in a few words. What have I learned from it all? How important is semi-tech in life? Well let's be honest...it's not. Unless you are actually on a semi-technical evacuation, which will probably only happen once every hundred years and then everyone from the Marine Corp to Bob will be there anyway, it does not matter. What does matter are the life skills you take away from it all. In my few years here I have vastly improved my teamwork, leadership, communication, and management skills. You can't get this stuff in chemistry. Even more importantly, I've had the opportunity to meet some really cool people. Just about every single person I've met in this group has helped mold my philosophy and outlook on life. My advice to anyone joining the group? Stick with it. BRMRG is a huge time commitment but in the end you get out so much more than you put in.

Matt Higgins is heading off to NC State for graduate school in chemical engineering where his research will not involve rats.

**Blue Ridge Mountain
Rescue Group**

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**Thank you to the
alumni like Erin
Steigler and
Charles Chopin
who got back in
touch with us. It
was great to hear
from you!!**

Search Log for 1998-99 School Year

8/30/98	6 yo male	Westmoreland Co.	Status 1
8/31/98	40 yo male	Rappahannock Co.	Status 2
10/10/98	87 yo male	King and Queen Co.	Status 1
10/16/98	48 yo male	Chesapeake Co.	Status 1
10/25/98	67 yo male	Pennington Gap	Status 1
10/31/98	69&60 yo f	Louden Co.	Status 1
11/6/98	50 yo fem	Newport News	Status 1
11/14/98	47 m, 6 f	Page Co.	Status 1
11/21/98	12 yo male	Virginia Beach	Status 1
11/24/98	71 yo male	Grayson Co	Status 1
11/24/98	41 yo male	Highland Co.	Status 3
11/30/98	47 yo male	Pennington Gap	Status 3
1/14/99	69 yo male	Rappahannock Co.	Status 1
1/19/99	73 yo male	Chesterfield Co.	Status 1
1/22/99	10 yo male	Fairfax Co.	Status 1
1/27/99	50 yo male	Clark Co.	Status 3
4/1/99	77 yo fem	Pittsylvania Co.	Status 1
5/9/99	48 yo male	Page Co.	Status 1

Lisa Hannon and Marc Zolides

This was the second year that the Lisa Hannon fund distributed an award in honor of Lisa Hannon who died in May of 1994 returning home from a search. This years award went to a proposal given by Justin Reich for the purchasing of certain training items

such as compasses and for the publishing of a knot training guide, currently on the web, created by Jason Dalton. The published guides will be given to the nine groups of the ASRC.

The Marc Zolides Fund was established in honor of Marc Zolides to provide a \$200 scholarship to a BRMRG member or member of a local Rescue Squad who both shares Marc's ebullient character and has a neat plan for a couple hundred bucks. BRMRG's own superhero Jason Dalton won the big money with his request for web-publishing software with which to juice up the Dog's

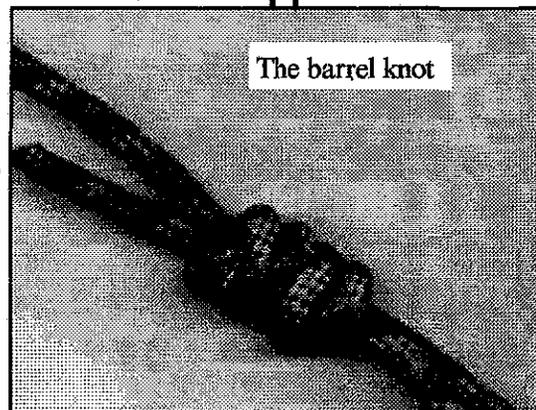
If you are interested in contributing to the Lisa Hannon and Marc Zolides funds or to the BRMRG General Fund, its fun, easy and tax deductible. The Lisa Hannon fund is an endowed fund that supports a yearly award to a SAR organiza-

tion of individual for the purpose of advancing SAR training. The Marc Zolides award is also an endowed fund which allows a yearly scholarship for an interesting project. The BRMRG General Fund is an account that provides crucial summer funding as well as supporting other operational needs.

To make a contribution—send check to:

UVa Alumni Association
PO Box 3446
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Checks should be made out to: UVA Fund-BRMRG and earmarked for one of the three funds. These gifts are tax deductible and you will receive both a receipt and our undying



The barrel knot



BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP, INC.
440 NEWCOMB HALL
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22904

March 31, 1999

"So that others may live"

Dear Friend,

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To Make a Contribution—

Send Check to:

UVa Alumni Association
PO Box 3446
Charlottesville, VA 22903

The Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group is ready to close yet another very successful year of training and searching. During the fall we were kept quite busy with searches (almost one a week all semester!), and all year we have been working with one of our largest training classes ever (nineteen people took the FTM test!). We continue to maintain our operational readiness, and we are making important capital purchases in training equipment, radios, and GPS technology.

One of the accomplishments we are most proud of over the last three years is our concerted effort to keep in touch with our alumni across the country and in some cases across the world. The *BRMRG Dispatch* is one way we try to let people know what we are up to. Our web page at brmrg.med.virginia.edu and our brmrg-alum@virginia.edu mailing list are ways that we can here back from our friends afar. If we haven't heard from you in a while, please drop us a line and let us know how you are doing.

One of the best parts of our strengthened relations with alumni has been their incredible generosity in supporting our mission. The BRMRG General Fund, which has swelled to almost \$2000 with help from our alumni, has been invaluable to us in providing much needed summer funding and money for large equipment purchases. We are hoping in the coming year to use this fund to help replace our cache of aging radios. Already one alumnae has donated \$500 towards the purchase of a new handheld, which will help us keep one more team in the field at searches and at training for the next decade.

But whether \$5 or \$500, every donation is important to us, and not just because it helps us meet our operational needs and expand our services. When alumni support us, it reminds us that people value the experience they had in BRMRG and believe in our mission. The support that we've begun to drum up from alumni has really been inspiring. With every single gift we receive, we remember that what we do is important and valued by our community, and that signal of support is every bit as important as the money behind it.

We hope you will consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the BRMRG General Fund. Checks can be made out to "UVA Fund-BRMRG" and mailed to the address below. Your support keeps our spirits high in the present and allows us to make investments into BRMRG's future. We hope to hear from you all soon!

Most Sincerely,

The BRMRG Board of Directors
On Behalf of the Membership