Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, Inc.
P.O.Box 440 Newcomb Station
Charlottesville, VA 22904

Minutes of the General Membership meeting
2 December, 1989

The meeting was called to order in Charlottesville, by Cady Soukup, Chairman

Present were:

Cady Soukup, SMRG; Bob Koester, BRMRG; Beth Pinkney, BRMRG; Gary Mechtel, SMRG; Greg Fuller, RSAR; Todd L'Herrou, RSAR; Peter McCabe, ESAR; Barbara Bradford, RSAR; C.D. Reaves, SWVMRG; Jennifer Shoemaker, SWVMRG; Pam Platt, BRMRG; Jennifer Heath, SWVMRG; Charles Chopin, BRMRG; Karen Binns, BRMRG; Marc Z., BRMRG; Steve Ritter, BRMRG; Donald Bowers, BRMRG; Edward Sihler, BRMRG; Deborah Mechtel, SMRG; William Dixon, BRMRG; Kevin Parkes, SMRG; Lorick Fox, RSAR; Meg Gralia, ESAR; Todd Burman, ESAR; David Stookesbury, BRMRG; Beth Pinkney, BRMRG; Vince Serio, RSAR; Tim Painter, SWVMRG; Milissa Brock, SWVMRG; Paul Fleenor, SWVMRG; Tabitha BeBoe; Trudy Teter, SWVMRG; Scott Garrett, SWVMRG; Robert Elron, SMRG; Dianne Burroughs, TSAR.

Voting by Proxy:

Beth Pinkney (2); Deming Herbert (5); Robert Koester (2) Debbie Mechtel (1); Gary Mechtel (3); Vince Serio (1); Greg Fuller (17); Lorick Fox (2).

Group Reports:

AMRG: No written report was submitted.

BRMRG: No syntax was used in the BRMRG written report, and it is reproduced verbatim: Searches, 2nd Mast/Radio, PIO person PIA's, Van Riper's Cancelled & phone-a-thon, GSAR, Medical Programs, PSAR - More hug-a-tree instructors/1000, BRMRG Library, Cylum Sticks, Copier, Training Schedule.

RSAR: New radio has been ordered, King field-programmable w/28 channels. Working with MetroCall to arrange pager service. 10 members took wilderness first aid. Moved from 18 members to 38 over the last year. Jan training is CPR, Feb training is Radio operations. Have 2 new hug-a-tree instructors. Plan 2 simulated searches in 1990. Current Alert officer: **Greg Fuller (804) 264-0109h, (804) 798-1336w, pager 094.** Secondary alert officer: Mark Pennington.

SMRG: Still working with post 617. Currently conducting fundraising, and getting circa $300 per session. SMRG has a new brochure. Recently purged roster, but also gaining new members: new have 25 members. SMRG is now utilizing GSAR as a training tool.

SWVMRG: Currently have 63 members at all levels, up from 21. Now have new alert/dispatch system, see details. 7 members completed GSAR = 4FTM, 2FTL, 1MSF. Now have 5 new EMT's, and 2 prospective Shock-Trauma techs.

ESAR: 616 now have 42 on roster, with 12 adult advisors. Of the 25 youth members, 9 are ESAR's (FTM or FTL types) & 12 are trainees. The remainder are not call-out qualified. Working on reconfiguring

bus to also serve as operations center. Unit will winter-train at Mt. Washington in Feb. 617 6 members, and 3 adult advisors. Working on a developing interest in a SAR unit at U. Maryland @ College Park.

TSAR: 24 active members, with 5 who meet the old 'basic' category. 2 incidents in Oct + Nov. Now have complete communications system, including 'base', mast, etc., as well as 3 handhelds. Will be hosting ASRConf. Training in March. Have reached approx 250 people in hug-a-tree presentations. Dave's GSAR class at Comm. College should graduate 6-7 people, and GSAR II will be offered in the spring.

Reports:

ASTM: William Dixon will serve as ASTM rep.

Communications: The change from commo officer to Secretary was described. R. Elron mentioned that he would like to participate in the training of group commo officers, so that proper conference-level procedure may be passed on to the group members. It was again mentioned that John Kihl has assisted greatly with the license.

Data Management: See attached detailed report from B.B. Oros.

Medical: Recertification of the ASRC medical license has been accomplished - kudos to Bob Koester. WEMT Programs: Keith is prepared to go to editorial board with curriculum, a state-supported class was held in VA, with improvements over pilot class, at least for meds. WFA: 16 hour course has been given to UVA (x2), ASRC, and RSAR. One is scheduled for TSAR. 8 hour course has been given to BRMRG, and scheduled for church groups.

MRA: Cady tried to get dues pro-rated, but the MRA board refused. Since we we now 'paid' for last year, Cady will try to get back newsletters sent to us. MRA newsletter will be doing a feature article on east coast SAR in an upcoming issue. In the future, MRA will be voluntary, @ $5.00/member.

Operations Committee: GOALS: I) provide preplan for Air-related incidents. II) Review and update the following documents> SAROP, Ops Manual, Alert procedures, Operational pre-plans. III) Create method to dessiminating learning points. IV) Have Conf. participate in 4 incidents in MD. V) have the conference participate in 2 incidents in PA. Actions to date: 1) Established an Ops Committee charter. 2) Worked towards goals: a) little positive to date, b) reviewed preplans w/ VaSARCo, VaDES, c) begun review of Alert Procedures. 3) Set up procedure to dissiminate learning points. 4) 4 incidents in MD, 5) no known incidents in PA.
    A letter was drafted to VaDES, concerning operation interaction between DES and ASRC. This letter includes compliments, suggestions, and concerns. Current concerns of the Ops committee are: (in no particular order) Committee meetings, non-return of dissiminated info, Command structure above the IC level, General alerting and dispatch, general level of IS training/performance. Morale, given # of incidents / # of personnel, Incident response, and non-incident response (i.e. Dogwood, July 4th, Civil War re-enactments, etc.).

PASARCo: Elections are now in progress. The structure of the PASARCo. is still in flux, and the elections may effect this.

Planning Committee: Planning committee now has a charter, but has accomplished little else. However, they have reviewed the process of re-developing a conference newsletter. (This was followed in the meeting by a discussion of newsletter formats, etc. T.L'H.)

Training Committee:Training committee needs group training schedules, please submit these regularly, or when changed/updated. P. McCabe requested that a conference training schedule be fixed 1 year ahead, a motion to that effect was made, and eventually voted down.

Treasurer: Yearly report: IN Dues collected = $300.00, MRA deposits = $243.00, Donations = $000.00, Beginning balance = $996.82. OUT BRMRG(newsletter) = $265.63, MRA = $240.00,

Stationary = $18.43, Secretary(copies/mailing) = $79.49, NASAR = $50.00, VA Incorporation fee = $35.00 **TOTALS: In = $543.00 + Beginning = $998.82 = $1541.82 Out = 688.36 Current = $851.36** Also owed in: AMRG $45, Also owed out: PaSARCo $35, ASTM $50

VaSARCo: Clues are still an important issue. VaSARCo has suggested that a clue taskforce be developed within operations div. to follow up clues. ASRC units should have and use the clue sheet. VaSARCo will be incorporating soon, and hopes to set up an official advisory board to DES.

Old Business:

Searches: No discussion of searches.

Dogwood: Kevin Parkes moved that ASRC accepts the role as SAR services provider for the 1990 Dogwood 1/2 Hundred, with SMRG and ESAR 616+617 as primary organizers. Passed with one abstention. **This year's Dogwood will be April 28th,** and ASRC is committed for **Friday, Apr 27th** organizing and team positioning.

February Meeting: Feb 3rd, @ 10:30 a.m. Discussion of past goals and setting new goals is the official topic.

ASRC Role: Discussion has held on the role of the ASRC in relation to the various groups. Points raised included: Centralization of paperwork vs the partially decentralized system we now use; That we are a corporation with obligations and agreements with other organizations; The relative difference between directors and delegates; What Conference can do for groups; Frequency and type of ASRC-wide training; Relative priorities of group vs Conference training events; and when to hold an Conference-wide simulation.

Board Action: Bob Koester moved that the general membership vote to accept the various actions the board has taken over the previous year. The motion passed.

New Business:

WFA: Koester presented his proposal for an advisory board for the Wilderness First Aid certification program. After discussion, a motion was made to form an Advisory Council, and the motion passed.

Medical Malpractice: Lorick Fox pointed out that we are probably the only EMS agency in the state which does not carry malpractice insurance. A committee of the whole was convened, and discussion of this issue took place. After discussion, the committee of the whole was dissolved.

Other new business: CAP should be used as a transportation resource when appropriate because of urgency. In addtion, use will allow more contact, and help in developing procedures for transport.

ASRC arrogance has been recently metioned to several members...we need to watch this.

The meeting was adjourned at 15:45 hours, DEC 2nd, 1989.

Board Meeting: After the general membership meeting, a special board meeting was held, and Vince Serio and Deming Herbert were voted in as IC's.

From: G. Mechtel
To: Ralph Wilfong, VDES SAR Coordinator
Date: December 19, 1989
Subj: Yearly Reviews.

Dear Ralph,

I am taking this opportunity to begin what I hope will be a yearly effort to formally address the ASRC's operational interactions with the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. My intention is to document those activities from the past year that significantly impact our mutual interactions. Hopefully, the Conference will continue this effort in the following years; you might consider a similar review from the commonwealth's perspective. This review process provides valuable feedback to both agencies, thereby helping direct future internal activities and future interactions. Hence this review will praise when appropriate, make suggestions if needed, and voice concerns when required. Your feedback, both general and specific, will be used to improve the ASRC's SAR performance. Ralph, if you feel that the ASRC can provide any additional services (e.g., helping review or define: operational requirements, training standards or course material), please feel free to ask for such aid.

Gary

From: G. Mechtel, ASRC Operations Officer
To: Ralph Wilfong, VDES SAR Coordinator
Date: December 19, 1989
Subj: Yearly Review of ASRC-VDES Activities.

cc: Cady Soukup, ASRC Chairman
ASRC Group Operations Officers
Greg Stiles, Virginia SAR Council Chairman

This letter addresses the past year's SAR activities as they relate to the Virginia Department of Emergency Services (VDES) and the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC). Historically, the ASRC and the VDES have consistently had an excellent working relationship; this relationship continues to this day. However, to maintain and improve our relationship, both agencies must periodically review their mutual interactions. While the primary criteria for conducting such reviews must derive from the ASRC's ability to aid the lost and injured, the Conference's overall utility to both the Commonwealth and the mid-Atlantic region must also be considered. This review therefore addresses ASRC-VDES interactions from the point of view of the ASRC and should be interpreted by the two criteria just named. The review items have been grouped into two categories: VDES activities and ASRC activities. These items are discussed below.

I.0 VDES Concerns and Activities:

1.1 The ASRC heartily congratulates VDES on its recent efforts to improve the quality of the tracking expertise available within the commonwealth. The efforts extended to provide training in this highly applicable search tactic have been outstanding.

1.2 The ASRC also congratulates VDES on providing the IC for SAR course. This too is an outstanding training course and the ASRC applauds VDES for adopting this course as part of the core SAR training curriculum.

1.3 The ASRC compliments VDES on the continous efforts to provide the GSAR college. This training proves valuable to both the ASRC and the commonwealth in general.

1.4 The ASRC compliments VDES on the general level of Operational interactions that have taken place during the past year's SAR incidents. The support provided by VDES is generally outstanding.

1.5   During this past year, the Commonwealth barely missed being struck by a powerful hurricane. While the general VDES response surely must have been good, the operational interaction between VDES and the ASRC in disaster incidents should be improved. VDES has stated both verbally and in writing (via their agreement with the Virginia SAR Council Standard Operating Procedures), that disaster response is a legitimate function of the SAR community. Yet given the high probability of multiple incidents throughout the commonwealth, the ASRC had to initiate the alerting procedure. Reflecting on the SAR problems discovered in North Carolina, it appears that trained, disciplined, self-sufficient SAR personnel would be a valuable asset in dealing with the initial aftermath of a disaster. Since the ASRC already had other multiple commitments to support disaster response activities in Maryland, it was important that the Conference coordinate responses throughout the region. Therefore, an alert prior to known natural disasters would prove operationally beneficial. Such an alert policy would allow for the necessary time to preplan lines of communication and control while helping optimize the ASRC's utility throughout the region during the alert phase prior to any actual call-outs. Any review of this ASRC-VDES interaction should not be limited to just alerting procedures, but should address command, control, communications, and logistics questions. Moreover, a better definition of the ASRC's operation role during a disaster would help resolve this issue.

1.6   VDES has already verbally requested that the ASRC help review the standing GSAR courses. The ASRC believes such a review should be conducted by the whole SAR community. However, for the new "Technical Rescue Expert" course presently under development, the limited information available indicates that a peer review of both the requirements and content of this course would prove most beneficial while the course is in its early developmental stage.

1.7   During this past summer, there was some confusion during the allocation of resources during a lost person incident (Wise Co., May 1989). The VDES SARDO determined that air scenting dogs were so necessary to properly prosecute the incident that air transportation was arranged. Yet the overhead management team was not considered as necessary, resulting in a significantly delayed management team response. The ASRC claims that good incident management (whoever provides it), is as important as good field searching resources. Therefore, the overhead team should have been given the same priority as the other resources.

1.8   A minor procedural point. It was brought to ASRC's Board of Directors' attention that an offical request was made to the Richmond SAR Group (RSAR) of the ASRC to support VDES at a state demonstration. This request is perfectly legitimate in that individual groups are allowed and encouraged to respond as the conference when providing information and dealing with administrative details. However, VDES additionally indicated that only RSAR could fulfill the request. While it is perfectly natural for VDES to request administrative and informational support from individual groups of the ASRC, it is ASRC policy that such requests are actually being made to the whole conference and an individual group is responding to such a request. If the group is not able to respond, the group should attempt to contact other conference resources to help meet the need. This particular concern actually represents an internal, mutually agreed on, conference policy that attempts to limit inter-group competition by declaring that all regional interactions are considered as conference-wide activities.

1.9   Another ASRC operational concern involves VDES personnel who are on scene. Is there any policy that indicates when VDES personnel will respond to an incident and what functions they will perform? Is the present procedure based solely on individual VDES personnel availability, or is it based on the nature of the incident? How do the VDES personnel integrate into the on-scene operational management? Do on-scene VDES personnel have the authority to assume any operational roles? In the case of VDES personnel who are also members of volunteer agencies, how do the volunteer agencies know when these individuals are available; and if on-scene, are these individuals volunteers, state employees, or both?

1.10   The equivalent questions arise for requesting or using VDES assets such as the motor home or communications equipment. Are there any documented operational criteria for requesting such equipment?

1.11   The ASRC requests that VDES consider providing a PIO Course to help train the volunteer personnel that respond to SAR incidents.

1.12   The ASRC requests that VDES consider developing a formal mechanism that will provide feedback on incident results. Presently, the mechanism is informal. A formal mechanism might include such information as patient status, (autopsy results when appropriate), local agency feedback (VDES may consider actively soliciting this data from the local agency), and other appropriate operational information. This process would help the volunteer agencies improve their day-to-day operational procedures and improve their members' morale.

1.13   If applicable, the ASRC requests that VDES look into the possiblity of providing an agreement that would allow the volunteer agencies the ability to use other VDES tactical frequencies when conducting SAR operations.   Additional frequencies allow for more operational channels (e.g. multiple divisions or branches) and for instances where the standard frequencies are not available due to other nearby users (paging systems, other emergency providers).

1.14   Some time ago VDES stated that the ASRC would be tasked with a major operational managerial role of conducting the ground portion of search and rescue activities needed when VDES was required to coordinate a missing aircraft search in mountainous or wilderness terrain.   Presently the ASRC has very little operational expertise in conducting or managing such activities and requests that VDES consider helping provide the necessary education.

2.0   ASRC Concerns and Activities.

2.1   The ASRC recognizes that as an agency it is far from perfect and needs to constantly try to improve its operational capabilities.

2.2   The ASRC often fails to provide the agreed upon documentation after completing incidents.

2.3   At all levels of training, individual ASRC members sometimes continue to exhibit sub-standard performances.   Anything less than standard performance from all members all the time is insufficient.

2.4   Given a conference with over 200 members, personnel response tends to concentrated in a very small percentage of the conference.   This concentration of response does not provide the commonwealth with a sufficiently broad manpower pool to draw upon for multiple incidents and leaves the commonwealth vulnerable to the availability of a few individuals.

2.5   The ASRC is in the process of refining its internal operational procedures, including alerting and dispatching.   This should help alleviate the problems noted in 2.4 and the continual problem of reliable information flow within the conference during an incident.

2.6   The ASRC has recently revised its training standards and is presently refining the testing and re-testing procedures. This should help resolve issues mentioned in 2.3.

2.7   The ASRC also recognizes that at times we have suboptimal interactions with the local resources and with other SAR agencies. This attitude problem stems from many sources and is something we continue to struggle with.

GOALS

1)   Create a position name.

2)   Create a set of position goals.

3)   Create Conference-wide personnel database.

4)   Organize a telecommunication system by which Conference information
would be available to conference members.

STATUS

1)   I recommend to the Chair that the name of this position should be:
ASRC DATA MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR.

2)   The list of position goals appears at the beginning of this report.

3)   The first major parts of the Conference database have been installed
in an ORACLE relational database. The table descriptions and general
relationships are available to anyone in the Conference who may have an
interest in such things. The main sections that are currently being used
pertain to individual member data such as name, address, phone numbers,
etc. The next two sections will contain the medical and field
qualifications, including qualification dates, expiration dates, who
qualified them, etc., and training information for all Conference members
- that's right a real Conference training database. Both of these new
sections are already being used by SMRG, and since the entire design of
this application is geared towards tracking an individual, Group
affiliation is actually irrelevant, and the only thing needed now to
implement this for the Conference, is the actual data from each of the
groups. Unfortunately, the only groups that have been responsive to
requests for data are the ESAR Posts, AMRG and TSARG. If the Conference
can be kept up to date, the burden of generating Group rosters, training
information and membership information can be handled by this application.
For example: Each month, reports can be generated in the form of a Group
roster and a list, by individual member, of the training incured by that
person to date, with any possible pending qualification expirations. These
reports can be mailed to each Group or can be placed in an electronic form
so that each group could download the information at their leisure. Or the
roster can be sent to the group secretaries for distribution within their
group, and the training info can be distributed to each of the Training
Officers.
      The issue of compatability between systems already used by each Group
to track this info, and this application have arisen. If there are any
special formats that a group would like to have their info in, or if there
is any special data that a group needs to maintain, modifications to the
application to suit that need will certainly be considered.

This may seem to be a little too easy and a little too efficient, but this whole system is already in place. All that needs to be done is to input the data. The actual entry of data is not that big of a task. Gathering the info for each Group will take the most time, and will create the largest road-block toward the Conference implementing this system. One would think that the groups would welcome a system where they could modify membership information, update training and qualification records, and have standardized reports automatically generated and sent to them - all over the phone if they want. But judging from the response received, it does not appear so.

In an effort to gather more data, there will be a request at this General Membership Meeting for all of the attendees to fill out their individual record sheets and return them to the appropriate person. Group rosters, according to the info in the database, and examples of the training report will be distributed to officers of the groups as an example of the types of reports available to them. This, hopefully, will help spark some interest in providing the necessary basic data for input into the system.

4)   Earlier this year, a request for donation was granted to the ASRC by TELENET Communications Corporation for the free use of a TELENET TELEMAIL mailbox. This mailbox differs significantly from the BITNET system that has fallen in and out of favor in the Conference.

Access to the mailbox is not limited as it is with BITNET to those with accounts at large universities, but is available to anyone with either a terminal and a modem or with access to a computer system that has the ability to connect to the TELENET Public Data Network (PDN). The TELENET PDN is the largest in the world and almost all major computer facilities have access to it. The access information will be available at the meeting.

One disadvantage of this mailbox as opposed to BITNET is the inability to send messages confidentially to an individual member. Although you can specify who the information is intended for, and that person can log on and retrieve that message, the mailbox technically sends messages only to itself, and all of the messages sent can be read by anyone who logs onto the system. I do not see this as a problem. If the information is that confidential and sensitive, then it can be sent in any number of other ways.

This mailbox can be used an electronic bulletin board that may contain training schedules, mission reports and near-real-time mission statuses and dispatch information. Currently, it contains the current Personnel roster and membership breakdown, and has been used to announce only a few training events.

BB Oros
Chairman,
Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group