

Minutes of the 2005 NSS Vertical Section Meeting July 6, 2005

The 2005 NSS Vertical Section meeting was held Wednesday, July 6, 2005 at the Grissom High School in Huntsville, Alabama. Executive Board members present were Chair Miriam Cuddington, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Boehle, At-Large members Bart Rowlett, Ed Sira, and Ed Kehs, Jr., Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator Terry Clark, Training/Education Coordinator Bruce Smith, and Contest Coordinator Bill Cuddington. Approximately 45 Vertical Section members were in attendance.

- I. **Meeting opened at 1:06 PM by Chair Miriam Cuddington**
Announcements - Thank you to all who helped at the climbing contest on Monday and Tuesday. Recognition of pioneer vertical cavers present at the meeting: John Cole and Dick Mitchell.
- II. **Minutes of the Last Meeting** - were published on the website. Minutes were accepted as published.
- III. **Officer Reports:**
 - o **Secretary/Treasurer:** Bill Boehle -
Secretary's Report - See attached.
Treasurer's Report - See attached.
 - o **Editor:** -
Information from Tim White (not present) relayed. Working on next volume. More articles are always appreciated. Bill Boehle also reported on the status of the Nylon Highway back issues. About half are out of print and no longer available. Bill is working on a project to scan these issues and make them available on the website. To date, five issues have been converted to PDF files (#1, 2, 3, 5, and 7) and posted on the website by Gary Bush. All issues will ultimately be scanned and posted. Issues will not be posted until all the existing stock of a particular issue is sold out. The scanned issues will be available to anyone visiting the website. Only the current issues will be located behind the passcoded portion of the website. The rest will be a reference resource to all interested parties.
 - o **VS Symbolic Items** - Bill Boehle. See Treasurer's Report. Commercial message: Plan ahead buy your sweatshirts at convention and save the postage.
- IV. **Committee Reports:**
 - o **Contest:** Bill Cuddington -
Thanks to all who help during the vertical contest. Whether you can only spend a little time or a lot, it all adds up. Without help it would be impossible to run the contest. Awards will be given out on Friday at 1:00 PM. Miriam added her thanks to all who volunteer their time to help at the contest. We appreciate any help from section members and others with timing, pulling rope, running the rack, etc.
 - o **Vertical Workshop:** Terry Clark -
Terry recounted that in recent years there has been some problems getting the money from the Vertical Workshop registrations collected by the conventions to the Vertical Section accounts. Lists of participants were compiled by Terry and Lynn Fielding. Lynn

then followed up with the past conventions and within three months all overdue monies were received by Treasurer Bill Boehle. Lynn is Terry's assistant with the workshop and handles all the paperwork for Terry. Terry thanked Lynn for all her hard work. Terry also informed the members that there are now some pictures from the vertical workshops posted on the website. These pictures were taken by Barb Ritts at the workshop held at the California convention. The workshop is held on Thursdays at convention and teaches various techniques at 8 stations. Qualified vertical cavers are always needed to help out with the workshop. Even if you are not vertically competent, there are plenty of jobs to do to assist with the workshop. There were about 36 students last year. There are 35 students registered for this year and about 5 more are expected. Miriam pointed out that there was a lot of vertical history represented in the room: John Cole, Dick Mitchell, Kirk MacGregor, Bruce Smith, and Bill Cuddington. Some reminiscing occurred. She thanked them for their contributions to vertical caving.

- **Education:** Bruce Smith -

The Basic Training Course manuals are available either from Tim White or Bruce. Last month Bruce was approached by John Hickman (Nashville) to give the Intermediate Training course another try. This has been a very difficult class to teach due to its complexity. You can't become proficient in some things in a short training class that are better learned through experience. We have to learn how to do this better. Bruce stated that he was humbled by some of the experience present in the room. He acknowledged the presence of Dick Mitchell and pointed out that there was a recent article in top sailing magazine that reviewed the Mitchell climbing system for use in mast climbing. The system is catching on and is expected more and more to replace the use of the traditional bosun's chair for this task. Bruce will try to get a link to the article if it is available online. Also received very well was the video prepared by Dave Socky. Bruce has had much positive feedback on it and it is being used strongly as a teaching aid. A issue was raised about the desire by some to add rescue related techniques to the Intermediate Training course. There was some discussion that this would be a mistake since the purpose of the training course series was to sequentially teach vertical techniques to regular students. Vertical techniques as it relates to cave rescue is very specialized and could be handled by NCRC as a separate course to add to its many other courses. Bruce agreed that this type of training might not be most appropriate under the Intermediate Training course. Regular students might not be capable at this point of their learning or even interested in the specialized aspects of the training that might be applicable to vertical caving in a rescue situation. Other forums for this training would most likely be more appropriate.

- **Web Page:** Gary Bush, webmaster -

The Nylon Highway issue for 2005 has not been started yet. Look for it shortly. Workshop pictures from Barb Ritts were relocated and are now posted. Everything else is up to date and more back issues of the Nylon Highway will be posted as they are scanned and converted to PDF files. At what point the newer issues will be taken out from behind the passcode will be up to the Executive Board. Suggestions for improvements are welcome and should be directed to Gary. Membership status information is now available on the website and is updated periodically. There was some discussion of why membership numbers had fallen off. It was generally agreed that past problems with getting our publication out were a major contributing factor. Since we have gone electronic our membership numbers have improved, with many old members returning. Hopefully this trend will continue. Greater membership fosters a more widespread exchange of ideas related to vertical caving. Kirk MacGregor raised the issue of sending out email renewal notices. This might help remind people to renew their membership. Larry Southam also suggested that an email notice should go out

when new articles are published in the Nylon Highway. The problems and practicalities of these suggestions will have to be looked at. Perhaps more reminders will inspire more articles to be submitted?

- **Rebelay Course:** Gary Bush -
It was busy this year. Thanks for the assistance of John Woods. This year 29 people signed up and 24 climbed the rope course. It was a long day, but it was well received by all who participated. As with any event of this nature, it would have gone more smoothly if more help were available. A lot of time is spent helping people who come in with problem with their rigs. Improper rigs make rebelay work more difficult. More help getting people setup properly would speed up the actual training on the rebelay course. Gary Storrack volunteered to help next year, but asked if he could be reminded a little before convention so that he could remember to bring certain gear with him. Training on tuning up your rig for better efficiency would be helpful for all climbers. Matching your gear to the task is very important (e.g., don't use a rack too big for a frog system if you are trying to do rebelays, etc.). Terry Clark suggested that perhaps we need a notice posted at the contest with a safety disclaimer concerning the various types and riggings of equipment used by the people competing.

V. **Old Business:**

- No old business from the floor

VI. **New Business:**

- Bill Cuddington raised the issue that he needs new record boards for the contest to cover all the Sit-Stand categories and the new 80-89 age group tier in the existing categories.
- Ed Kehs, Jr. Thanks to the Vertical Section from the JSS for the use of ropes and help with training the vertical cavers of tomorrow. Usually they spend time on one day with training in the gym followed by going to a cave or cliff the next day to practice what they learned. Ed pointed out that he could use more help from experienced climbers to make everything work more smoothly in the future. The kids need to be kept busy so they don't get bored. More adult help would speed up the process and keep everything moving safely. The kids are really interested in learning. The section acknowledged the good job that Ed is doing with the kids in the JSS. It was also raised that we need to ensure that there are better facilities at the convention for rappelling (both for adults and kids). 15 feet or so off the bleachers is not adequate to teach and practice rappelling.

VII. **Elections:**

- **Secretary/Treasurer** (1-year term) - Bill Boehle was nominated and re-elected by acclamation.
- **Editor** (1-year term) - Tim White was nominated and re-elected by acclamation
- **At-Large Board Members** (2-year term, 2 to be elected) - Miriam Cuddington, Brice Williams, Bart Rowlett, and Dan McConnell were nominated. A ballot of the section members present was taken and Miriam Cuddington and Brice Williams were elected. [Note: Current At-Large members Ed Sira and Ed Kehs, Jr. have 1 year remaining in their terms.]

VIII. **Motion to Adjourn:**

Motion to adjourn was made and carried. Time of adjournment was approximately 2:40 PM.

[Additional note: Subsequent to the Meeting, the new Board Members elected Miriam Cuddington as Chair. The three appointed members were re-appointed to serve for another year. They are:

- Contest Committee - Bill Cuddington
- Vertical Techniques Workshop Committee - Terry Clark
- Education Committee - Bruce Smith

The Executive Committee addressed one additional item. At the 2004 business meeting the following resolution was adopted: Resolved that the Executive Committee may determine a transportation reimbursement subsidy for Section material used at convention. To address this resolution, Ed Sira made a motion that was discussed and then amended (as proposed by Brice Williams) to set the subsidy at \$100 plus \$0.10 per mile. The committee passed this motion. Based upon this action, payment for the 2005 convention to Terry Clark in the amount of \$150 was approved (\$100 + 500 miles @ \$0.10).]

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Boehle

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NSS VERTICAL SECTION
SECRETARY'S REPORT

JUNE, 2005

By Bill Boehle

Number Of Memberships	191
Number Of Members Paid Through 2005	123
Number Of Subscribers Paid Through 2005	12
Number of Annual Volumes Paid Through 2005	17
Number of Complementary Subscriptions	3

YEARS PAID:	MEMBER/SUBSCRIBER	ANNUAL VOLUME
2006	50	8
2007	14	2
2008	0	0
2009	1	0
2010	1	0
2011	0	0
2012	1	0

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