

Minutes of the
2010 NSS Vertical Section Meeting
August 4, 2010

The 2010 NSS Vertical Section meeting was held Wednesday, August 4, 2010 at the Vermont EXPO Center in Essex Junction, Vermont. Executive Board members present were Chair Dick Mitchell, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Boehle, At-Large Executive Members Miriam Cuddington, Terry Mitchell, and Rory Tinston, Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator Terry Clark, and Contest Coordinator Bill Cuddington. Education/Training Coordinator Bruce Smith and Nylon Highway Editor Tim White could not attend the convention and no proxy was designated. Approximately 16 additional Vertical Section members were in attendance.

I. Meeting opened at 1:07 PM by Chair Dick Mitchell.

A. Announcements - Welcome to everyone who came. Agenda, minutes, and other information available in packet. Membership/Attendance roster circulated. Introduced EC members present.

II. Minutes of the Last Meeting - were published on the website and there were no amendments or changes. A motion was made (Gary Bush; second - Miriam Cuddington) and the minutes were accepted as published.

III. Officer's Reports:

A. Secretary's Report - Bill Boehle. See attached. Accepted as presented.

B. Treasurer's Report - Bill Boehle. See attached. No further discussion. Accepted as presented.

C. VS Symbolic Items - Bill Boehle. See Treasurer's Report for sales numbers.

D. Nylon Highway Editor's Report - No report.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Contest Committee - Bill Cuddington. Thanks to PMI for donating 1200 feet of EZ`Bend rope this year for the climbing contest. We noticed some fuzzing in the first 30 meters of the main rope (89 climbs), but it was not excessive. We may use some of the Pit Rope next year for comparison. Thanks to all who help during the vertical contest, especially Miriam and Virginia Clark on the books and Ernie Coffman and Barry Ferguson on the racks. We appreciate any help from section members and others with timing, pulling rope, running the rack (the racketteers), etc. Awards will be given out at 1:00 PM on Friday.

B. Vertical Workshop - Terry Clark. This year we have 15 people signed up so far. With a smaller group, students will get more reps. Thanks to PMI for their support of the vertical workshop. We are cutting up the contest ropes for use in the workshop. This way we are getting more use out of the donated ropes and have less gear to haul to the convention. Terry wants to recognize and thank the instructors who help him and Lynn run the vertical workshop. It makes his job easy. We have a new batch of instructor T-shirts available this year for instructors who have helped out for three or more years. It was suggested that the workshop manual be handed out to students during registration rather than at

the end of the session. This way they could be referred to during segments like knot tying.

C. Training/Education - Bruce Smith provided report presented by Dick Mitchell.

Bruce has been in contact with many grottoes who are using the Basic Training Course. He notes that he is amazed with how many "regional modifications and adaptations" are made to the basic course as published. At what point is it no longer the Vertical Section course if they are making substantial changes to the course? If you are aware of significant changes or modifications to our training guidelines being used locally, Bruce would like those people to communicate with him so that we can evaluate what people are doing around the country. This way we can update the course to incorporate better or "other" ways to do things and share this information with everyone.

Last year we completed the Intermediate Course and made it available via download for no charge on the website. However, we have had no students register that they are starting the course or who have filed for a certificate of successful completion. The lack of feedback makes us wonder on if, and how, the intermediate course is being used by the vertical community. Some discussion followed. Terry Mitchell reported that in his grotto about 10 people started working on the intermediate course last year and that 7 are still actively working on the training, with 2-3 close to completing the course. Since it is a self-paced, mentor driven course it is taking a longer time to get it done than Bruce may have anticipated. Other than the time it is taking, Terry has experienced no problems with the course itself. Other experiences are that many people are not willing to commit the time that is needed to learn the techniques in detail. Most seem to prefer the one-day overview type training, which is not what the intermediate course is all about.

D. Re-Belay Course / "Dial In Your Gear" Session - Gary Bush and John Woods. This year about 15 people showed up for the rebelay training. It started off slow, but they were busy throughout the day. Terry Mitchell helped out all day with Gary. As in the past, John spent a lot of time with people setting up and adjusting their gear. It was well received by all who participated.

E. Awards Committee - Dick Mitchell. Last year we completed our project to recognize and thank all those individuals who have served the Vertical Section since 1972 as officers, at-large board members, committee chairs, and Nylon Highway editors. This year we wanted to recognize PMI for it's long time support for the Vertical Section. The EC approved a special award to PMI that was presented to Steve Hudson at the National Rescue Council symposium in Colorado. Needless to say, Steve was completely surprised and grateful for the recognition in front of his peers. Dick pointed out that the Awards Committee is open to nominations for future recognition.

Gary Bush took over this portion of the meeting to make a presentation for the EC. Many people volunteer to further the goals of the NSS, the Vertical Section, and caving in general. It is the purpose of these awards to recognize these people for their long time contributions. The EC voted to award a lifetime achievement award (letter and plaque) to Dick Mitchell for his leadership and contributions to caving including his development of the user-friendly Mitchell Climbing System which is used by many people today. Much tears and applause followed the presentation. Note: Dick was unaware this award was coming since the votes on this subject were done without his knowledge by the rest of the EC.

F. Bylaws Committee - Bill Boehle and Terry Mitchell. Bill Boehle reported that he and Terry have been working on both a Constitution change and a related Bylaws change concerning the addition of a Vice Chairman position to the EC and the process of selection the Nylon Highway editor. If the Chairman should be unavailable for any reason, it would be difficult for the EC to conduct business. The EC discussed this last year and the Bylaws Committee was charged to find a way to incorporate a Vice Chairman position to facilitate the conduct of business in the event any problems. After evaluating suggested options from the EC, we determined that the changes necessary were not that complicated. The proposed changes were sent out via the Section listserv and are include in today's agenda and information packet. Our solution is to amend the Constitution to authorize the EC to also elect a Vice Chairman from the existing at-large members, similar to how the Chairman is currently elected. It does not add a new EC member. Also proposed is to move the Nylon Highway Editor from an elected position to an appointed position. The reasons for this being an elected position are no longer relevant in the age of electronic publication. A corresponding change to the Bylaws setting the duties of the Vice Chairman and other minor cleanup is also proposed for EC vote if the Constitution change is approved by the membership today. These proposed changes will be addressed under new business.

G. Web Page - Gary Bush webmaster. Gary reported that we finally incorporated a photo gallery on the website where we can display photos from past events. If anyone has photos of past meetings, contests, or other events, they should send them to Gary Bush to be included. Please identify dates, locations and people, if possible. If people would like other things on the website, send Gary an email and we will see what can be done.

Gary also asked that the EC needs to discuss and consider whether we want to continue the password access to the Nylon Highway since we have discontinued the dues requirement for Section membership. John Woods pointed out that if you Google the topics contained in a Nylon Highway article, that the search bypasses the password security that we have. Gary acknowledged that we never set up a strong security system. Ernie Coffman suggested that if we remove the password that we put some type of disclaimer on the website to protect us from people who might improperly use information they may access.

V. Old Business:

A. Following up on last years request for any information on the old Nylon Highway editor who stole funds from the Section, Bruce Smith received an email from that person with his explanation of events and containing an apology to the Vertical Section. The current status remains that his NSS life membership was revoked, but that none of our funds was recovered.

VI. New Business:

A. Proposed change to the Constitution Re: Vice Chairman position. This proposed change was discussed under the Bylaws Committee report above and previously distributed to the membership via the VS listserv and in today's meeting packet. Barry Ferguson made a motion to adopt the Constitution change proposed. Gary Bush seconded the motion. The motion PASSED.

The adopted Constitution change to paragraph IV now reads as follows:

IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. The Vertical Section shall be governed by an Executive Committee (EC) of nine members, composed as follows.

1. Elected members. The Secretary-Treasurer and four Committee Members At-large shall be the elected members of the EC. The section Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be elected annually by the EC from the four At-large EC members.

2. Appointed members. A Newsletter Editor, a Contest Coordinator, a Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator, and an Education Coordinator shall be the appointed members of the EC.

B. Elections for the Executive Committee shall be held annually by secret ballot at the Vertical Section meeting at the NSS Convention. Terms of Office for the four Members At Large shall be two years, with terms staggered by electing only two at each annual election. All other members' Terms of Office shall be one year. The Secretary-Treasurer and two of the four Committee Members At-Large shall be elected annually by the Section Membership. The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be elected annually from the four Committee Members At-Large by the elected members of the Executive Committee. The Editor, the Contest Coordinator, the Vertical Techniques Workshop Coordinator, and the Education Coordinator shall be nominated by the new Chairman and confirmed by the elected members of the Executive Committee. In the event that an NSS Convention is not held, the elections shall be held by mail in September of that year.

C. No changes

D. No changes

B. Proposed change to the Bylaws Re: Vice Chairman position and related changes. These proposed changes were discussed under the Bylaws Committee report above and previously distributed to the membership via the VS listserv and in today's meeting packet. This is an EC vote. Bill Boehle made a motion to adopt the Bylaw changes proposed. Rory Tinston seconded the motion. The motion PASSED.

The adopted Bylaws changes to Bylaw 4) is as follows:

ADD paragraph 4) (B) (iii) to read:

(iii) VICE CHAIRMAN
- Assume the duties of the CHAIRMAN when that individual is not present or unable to perform the duties of the office.
- Ascend to the office of CHAIRMAN if that office becomes prematurely vacant.
- Assist the CHAIRMAN in conducting section business and temporarily perform additional duties as directed by the CHAIRMAN.

CHANGE paragraph 4)(B) as follows: Re-number existing sub-paragraphs 4)(B)(iii) to (viii) as 4)(B)(iv) to (ix).

CHANGE paragraph 4)(C)(iii) as follows: (iii) Order of Election: - Election of the Secretary-Treasurer will be held first. Elections for the At-Large Committee Members will then be held, with unsuccessful candidates from the first contest eligible to run.

CHANGE paragraph 4)(C)(iv) as follows: (iv) Chairman: - The Chairman shall be selected by the elected Executive Committee from the At-large Committee Members.

ADD paragraph 4)(C)(v) to read:

(v) Vice Chairman: - After selection of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall be selected by the elected Executive Committee from the remaining At-large Committee members.

C. Bob Thrun continues to be unhappy with the Nylon Highway as posted on the website. Gary Bush stated that the oldere PDF copies are at least as good as the original documents from which they were created (by scanning). The newer files are created directly from the original digital documents. He acknowledges that the last two years have not yet been converted to PDFs. Any comments should be sent to the editor (Tim White).

VII. Elections:

A. Secretary/Treasurer (1 year term) - Bill Boehle was nominated and reelected by acclamation.

B. At-Large Board Members (2 year term, 2 to be elected) - Dick Mitchell, Terry Mitchell, and John Woods were nominated. A ballot of the section members present was conducted. Dick Mitchell and Terry Mitchell were elected by a majority of the votes cast. [Note: Current At-Large members Miriam Cuddington and Rory Tinston have 1 year remaining in their terms.]

VIII. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn was made and carried. Time of adjournment was approximately 2:16 PM.

[Additional note: Subsequent to the Meeting, the Board Members elected Dick Mitchell as Chair and Terry Mitchell as Vice Chair. The four appointed members were re-appointed to serve for another year. They are:

- * Contest Committee - Bill Cuddington
- * Vertical Techniques Workshop Committee - Terry Clark (Assistant: Lynn Fielding)
- * Education Committee - Bruce Smith
- * Nylon Highway Editor - Tim White

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Boehle

(Rev. 0)
To be approved at 2011 Convention meeting