



# Allegeny Mountain Rescue Group

[www.amrg.info](http://www.amrg.info)

April- May 2010

## Upcoming Trainings

Tuesday, May 4: AMRG monthly business meeting at 6:30 p.m. at UPMC Mercy; classroom training to follow at 7:30. Topic will be map & compass navigation, an FTM requirement (hint, hint).

Sunday, May 9: Field training, formal point-to-point compass navigation. This is a skill-set we don't use a \*lot\* on missions, but is absolutely fundamental and, again, required for FTM certification (state and ASRC). Location TBA, but the time will be noon. (Note that this training will be on a Sunday because May is spring gobbler season -- if you're out and about, try to avoid hunting areas, and in any case don't wear red, blue, and black! Blaze orange is always a good idea.) FTM/L candidates, please get out for this one -- and everybody, again let me know if you're coming so we can plan appropriately.

Note -- There are canine trainings each week. Come out and help the team by hiding for a canine task or get extra practice with your navigation skills. Please contact Heather Houlahan for details on future canine trainings.

These trainings are open to any who are interested, unless noted, and are offered free of charge. Pre-registration is required, however, as space may be limited. Please contact AMRG Training Officer [Ken Chiacchia](#) with any questions or to register

## Upcoming Events

EMTs and WEMTs needing recertification: The dates and location for a WEMT class this fall have been announced by CDS Outdoor School. September 17-19 and October 8-10, Camp Soles, near Somerset. Price TBA.

## April and May Activities

Senator Orié's 14<sup>th</sup> annual Emergency Responders Forum was held April 22. Several AMRG members were on hand to educate the attendees about search and rescue resources available to them

Also on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, there was a Swift Water Rescue class which several members were able to attend.

The canine handlers were given the opportunity for an additional training on April 28th when the chief of Harmony VFC graciously offered us the use of an abandoned house that will be torn down in a couple of weeks to make way for a new on-ramp to I-79 from Harmony (he's been given use of it by PennDOT to conduct fire drills). The scenario was missing/lost children, with a search of the kids' home necessary to rule out a hiding child/crime victim.

Thursday through Sunday, April 29 through May 2: PSARC annual SAR-EX conference, Pinch Pond Campground, Manheim, Pa. Two members were able to attend. Our Training Officer Ken was an instructor for several classes.

### **Special Thanks**

A special thanks to Ibis Tek, LLC for donating the IR/HID light bar for our ATV.

The infrared lights dramatically improve the performance of our night vision. Also, the HID flood lights instantly turn a dark wilderness to daylight.

This generous contribution should be a great tool in helping to locate and safely return lost subjects to their families



### **Meet the Members**

#### **Michael Berger**

Michael is an executive with a downtown Pittsburgh marketing communications agency where he practices public relations. A native of New Jersey, Michael came to Pittsburgh to attend and graduate from Duquesne University. Michael is also a graduate of CCAC's EMT program, and has completed a number of advanced emergency medical and wilderness programs. In addition to AMRG, Michael regularly volunteers as an EMT with Ross West View EMS.



### **Ben McCandless**

I am a former Alaskan who recently settled into the Highland Park neighborhood of Pittsburgh with Audrey (my wife) and Leah (my daughter). I enjoy all manner of outdoor activities, but my most recent passion is Adventure Racing (which conveniently combines many of them). I first became interested in search and rescue while growing up in Wrangell, Alaska (pop. 2,500), where I was a member of the local volunteer fire department, which also provided EMS and rescue services. When I moved away from Wrangell to the "Big City", I thought volunteer Fire/Rescue/EMS services were limited to truly remote locations, so I was thrilled to come across AMRG. In my "off" time, I am either sleeping, or being a mechanical engineer for Blue Belt Technologies, Inc., a CMU spin-off focusing on computer-assisted surgery.



### **Jason Willis**

I am a native of the Pittsburgh area growing up in Irwin, PA. I attended undergrad at Penn State Behrend in Erie, PA. I am currently in graduate school at Pitt for Environmental Engineering and reside in Greenfield, PA. In addition to grad school, I work as an engineer for Paul C. Rizzo Assoc. in Monroeville, PA. My hobbies include going fast and shredding on any type of bike, climbing, running, hiking, traveling, and numerous other outdoor activities. I attained a Wilderness First Responder certification last summer and wanted to put it to additional use, which is how I came across AMRG.

- Ben McCandless recently raced in the Solo category of the Yough Xtreme adventure race. He placed 5<sup>th</sup>!