



# NCEMSF NEWS

Newsletter of the National Collegiate Emergency Medical Services Foundation

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Winter 2000

## The Texas A&M Bonfire Collapse

An incident that we all train for, but never want to experience

Jack Van Cleve, EMT-P, EMD, TAMU EMS Chief



With an average daily population of over 80,000, Texas A&M University (TAMU) is a unique environment being served by three different collegiate EMS services. TAMU EMS provides both basic and advanced life support, treatment, and transport to any and all students, faculty, staff and visitors while on the

A&M campus or surrounding University properties. The Emergency Care Team, TAMECT, provides first aid at events such as Bonfire cut, stack, and burn, home football games, corps events, concerts, races, rodeo, and biathlons. The third service on campus is The Recreation Sports Medics. This is a BLS service that staffs buildings and events that are operated by the Department of Recreation Sports.

As collegiate EMS providers, we deal with hurt and sick students on a daily basis. We can usually fix 'em up or make them feel a little bit better before taking them to the hospital. But, what if an incident occurs and there are a number of seriously injured and even dead patients otherwise known as a mass casualty incident or MCI? This is something that we, as EMS providers, train and prepare for, yet hope that it never happens. Unfortunately, it did happen early on the morning of November 18, 1999.

At around 0245, Texas A&M University EMS dispatch received a call from medics on site that the Bonfire "stack", as it is known to Aggies, had fallen. Medics are required by the University to be on site for all Bonfire activities. At the stack site, there were two EMTs, 2 CPR/First Aid medics, and one paramedic, who immediately went into action after the stack collapsed. The paramedic, a former EMS

Chief, took Triage Command while the EMTs, with the assistance of the other medics, began to sort through and triage patients, not knowing if they had friends or classmates who were trapped or even dead. The first ambulance from TAMU EMS arrived on scene followed by an engine from College Station Fire Department. Triage was nearly completed as these first units arrived. Prior to the arrival of additional assistance, it was difficult to group the walking wounded into one general area. An all call was sent out for additional medics shortly after the first call came in.

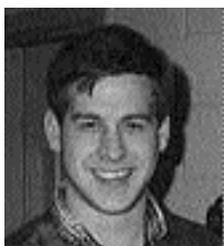
Within the first 20 minutes, we had medics on scene from all three campus EMS services, including the Emergency Care Team, Rec. Sports, and EMS. A second ambulance was put in service and dispatched to the scene as well as all of the ambulances from Bryan & College Station Fire Departments, including heavy rescue. All patients not trapped were transported within the first hour according to their triage priority. At that point, our

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# President's Corner

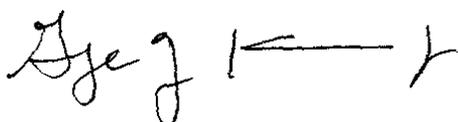


This past year has proven to be a year of continued growth for the National Collegiate EMS Foundation. However, this growth has not occurred without growing pains. For those persons who experienced a delay in receiving membership materials or information in general please accept my apology. In our attempt to position NCEMSF in a stronger financial position we were forced to prioritize tasks at hand. Much of our time was focused

on our first comprehensive fund raising campaign. We targeted approximately 1000 companies for sponsorship. Although the progress of our fundraising campaign has been slow, the initial results appear promising. We are aggressively working on implementing new initiatives to prevent future shortcomings in member services. One of these initiatives is the consolidation and streamlining of our member processing. Another initiative is the creation of regional coordinators. The addition of regional coordinators should help to improve communication among our member organizations.

I am pleased to report that the 7th Annual NCEMSF Conference hosted by the University of Delaware was a success. It was our largest conference to date with approximately two hundred and eighty attendees representing twenty-six organizations. The conference sessions ranged from behavioral emergencies to legal issues and EMS to campus EMS management issues. The conference culminated with a presentation on "The Texas A&M Bonfire Collapse". In addition to the scheduled activities the Board of Directors had the opportunity of personally interacting and discussing operating issues with several organizations. We pride ourselves on our problem solving abilities and our availability to organizations in need of our assistance. It is our hope that everyone departed from the conference with new ideas and a renewed enthusiasm for campus EMS.

Many people at the conference asked me how do I have the energy for medical school and NCEMSF. At the time, I really did not have an answer. However, on my trip back to Philadelphia, I realized the source of my energy comes from each you. Your stories of success and your stories about how NCEMSF impacts your organization fuels me to find those extra minutes everyday. I thank each of you for making NCEMSF what it is today. The journey has only started, but with your continued support we will continue to reach milestones.



George Koenig  
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president@ncemsf.org

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Articles for inclusion in the newsletter must be submitted by e-mail or on diskette. To submit material for publication, contact the secretary. NCEMSF reserves the right to edit any submitted articles and photographs.

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# Empowerment Through Information

Scott Savett, NREMT-I, NCEMSF Vice-President

If you've been involved with NCEMSF for more than a few years, you have probably noticed that the type and amount of information available through our Web server has changed significantly. What started out in 1994 as a one-page listing of campus EMS groups has grown to a complex Web site with over 650 pages occupying over 40 megabytes of disk space. That's a lot of information in one place -- perhaps too much information. Consequently, quickly finding exactly what you need on our site may have recently become an issue.

NCEMSF is preparing to launch our fourth generation Web server. If you've looked at our on-line database of campus EMS organizations at <http://db.ncemsf.org>, you have already gotten a taste of the technology that powers the new server. A powerful combination of SQL databases and a dynamic scripting language make the information you need more accessible than ever.

Accessibility is only part of the equation. Our Web server and databases are only as good as the information they contain. Using new technology, we have begun to empower you and your campus EMS organization to keep your information in our database updated. All of the communication between NCEMSF and you relies on up-to-date contact information. NCEMSF newsletters and announcements of programs and events, such as Campus EMS Week and the annual NCEMSF Conference, are sent to the mailing addresses you provide. Our databases are also used to generate statistical information about trends in campus EMS. By giving you the tools to update your group's information, we significantly reduce the undeliverable mail generated from our

mailings. It also ensures that information we provide to other organizations, such as news services and print media, properly reflect the current state of campus EMS.

Our advanced database of campus EMS organizations is already online. With around 150 schools listed, it is the most comprehensive resource of its type in the world. A wealth of searchable information is at your fingertips. It is especially powerful when trying to find campus EMS groups at schools similar to yours. Perhaps you wanted to know what campus EMS groups are at public universities in New York with more than 10,000 students. With a few clicks of the mouse, the answer would be in front of you. Or perhaps you are lobbying to get an automatic external defibrillator (AED) on your campus. Armed with the information that fifty-two campus EMS groups already have AEDs, you can make a compelling argument to your university administration.

Relatively soon, we will also be using the same technology to place our individual membership database online. Unlike the campus EMS organization database, the membership database will not be searchable. NCEMSF takes your personal privacy very seriously. Instead, you will be given a username and password to update your own record. You will be able to see your membership status and change your address and other contact information.

In closing, I'd like to tell you that the NCEMSF officers are working diligently to implement these changes that will ultimately streamline the flow of information within our organization. As a result, you should receive more timely status updates about your

*please see Information, page 7*

# NATIONAL COLLEGIATE EMS FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

February 11-13, 2000



Newark, DE - The seventh annual conference of the National Collegiate Emergency Medical Services Foundation (NCEMSF) was held February 11-13, 2000 in Newark, DE. The Conference, hosted by the University of Delaware Emergency Care Unit, was attended by over 280 representatives of campus EMS organizations from schools across the U.S. and Canada. The annual conference is an opportunity for campus EMS providers to get together and share ideas.

"What is most impressive about campus EMS groups is that much of this service to campuses is primarily being provided by students attending those colleges and universities," said George Koenig, Jr., President of NCEMSF. "Students are taking leadership roles and often fully run these services. They range from providing basic first responder services to full paramedic level ambulance services serving the campus and in many cases the surrounding community."

This year's conference seminars included programs on EMS response to college research laboratories, common street drugs on the college campus, crime scene preservation, and other workshops related to campus life. The banquet speaker was Edward T. Dickinson, MD, NREMT-P, FACEP, Assistant Professor and Director of EMS Field Operations for the University of Pennsylvania Department of Emergency Medicine and Medical Editor of the Journal of Emergency Medical Services.

The keynote lecture was "The Texas A&M Bonfire Collapse" presented by Jack Van Cleve, EMT-P, Chief of EMS at Texas A&M University EMS and Ryan Carney, EMT-B, Logistics Captain at Texas A&M University EMS. The Texas A&M University EMS, Emergency Care Team, and Rec Sports Medics were awarded commendations from the National Collegiate EMS Foundation for their work on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire.

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## 1999 Campus EMS Awards

Provider of the Year

**Steven W. Zils**  
Illini EMS  
University of Illinois  
at Urbana-Champaign

Advisor of the Year

**Park "Sparky" Knight**  
Texas A&M Emergency Care Team

Web Site of the Year

**Villanova University EMS**

Organization of the Year

**Rice University EMS**

Four schools were recognized for the outstanding quality of their EMS organizations with the **Striving for Excellence in Campus EMS** recognition. They were:

**Columbia University EMS**  
**Tufts University EMS**  
**Texas A&M University EMS**  
**St. Bonaventure University MERT**

## **Bonfire**, *Continued from page 1*

medics were in verbal contact with five patients still trapped in the rubble. Our services initiated care on scene including both BLS and ALS intervention. Bryan Fire Department and Texas Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams were in-charge of extricating the students that were still trapped. Oxygen, IV fluids, and psychological support were rendered to these students while they were trapped. Three of the students were extricated fairly quickly and transported to local hospitals. The remaining two were pinned deep within the stack. Doctors on site ordered blood to be brought to the scene. A TAMU EMS supervisor responded to the hospital to pick up and deliver the units of blood. The last patient was extricated more than six hours after the collapse and was transported to the hospital. Then the USAR team had the difficult task of determining if there were any more students alive in the stack. Their sensitive listening equipment did not pick up anything that could be identified as scratching, knocking, yelling or screaming, and the massive rescue efforts changed gears into a recovery operation. Cranes and heavy equipment were used to remove the logs. The Emergency Care Team staffed a first aid station and remained on site until the operation was completed just short of 25 hours after the collapse. There are many lessons learned from this incident and I want to address the positive and negative issues that we encountered.

### Negative Issues:

- Identification of personnel. Since many of our personnel responded from their dorms and apartments in what they could get on quickly, they were not identified as EMS personnel. This caused problems as the incident progressed and security got tighter.
- Air medical services were not used or considered at all during this incident. With the type of trauma received by some of the patients, a Level I Trauma Center is better equipped to handle those injuries. Level I Trauma Centers are less than 30 minute transport time by air.
- Identification of TAMU EMS command staff and supervisors at the scene. We did have reflective vests but not enough and with the right titles that correspond to the incident command system.
- Communication was a problem because the area phone system crashed for a while. Cell

phones were virtually useless, and it was hard to reach local numbers within our area code.

- Some of our personnel refused to leave the scene for rehab and rest, even though they were asked numerous times.

### Positive Issues:

- Two weeks prior to this incident, a class was held on Mass Casualty Incidents that was taught by one of our former medics. This class was a major reason why the incident ran well.
- The triage on scene was excellent. Every patient was triaged in a short amount of time and was transported quickly from the scene.
- The response from the community and the University was overwhelming. Anything that was asked for was given with no questions asked.
- The response from the former medics was extremely helpful. Since many of our former members work in the EMS field in administrative positions, they were able to provide us with whatever resources we needed. Montgomery County Hospital District EMS sent two ambulances to cover the campus for 24 hours while we restocked our ambulances and rehabilitated. Austin EMS also sent an ambulance to relieve the MCHD ambulances for another 24 hours. This gave personnel a few days off to rest and regroup. A few former members actually came and relieved medics staffing the first aid stations to allow them time to rest. Others sent equipment and money to use for whatever we needed.

This was an incident that we all train for, but never want to experience. This event taught us positive things as well negative. It will forever be indelibly printed in the minds of all of those involved.

Jack Van Cleve and Ryan Carney, TAMU EMS Logistics Captain, gave the keynote lecture at the NCEMSF Annual Conference in Newark, Delaware.

# Collegiate EMS Skills Competition

The first Collegiate EMS Skills Competition was held at the 2000 Annual Conference in Delaware and the following schools were awarded first place in each event. They were:

Event 1: Airway & Breathing  
**St. Michael's Fire & Rescue Squad**  
St. Michael's College

Event Two: Trauma Assessment  
**Emory First Responder Unit EMS**  
Emory University

Event Three: Relay Event  
**Illini EMS Team 3**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The winners for the overall Collegiate EMS Skills Competition were:

First  
**Illini EMS Team 3**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Second  
**Illini EMS Team 2**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Third  
**Penn State University EMS Team 3**

Fourth  
**Tufts University EMS Team 2**



First Place Winners: Illini EMS Team 3 from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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## 2000 NCEMSF Officers

The results of the 2000 NCEMSF Officer elections were announced at the annual conference. Please welcome the 2000 NCEMSF Officers.

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## Become Involved in NCEMSF

Do you want to become more involved in NCEMSF? Join us as a Regional Coordinator. Regional Coordinators (RCs) work with individual schools and the NCEMSF Board. This is a great opportunity to increase your involvement in collegiate EMS. We are looking for RCs in the following regions.

Northern New England - ME, NH, VT  
 New York - NY  
 Pennsylvania - PA  
 Southeast - NC, SC, GA, TN, KY, FL  
 Midwest - OH, IN, MI  
 Central - MO, LA, TX, OK, CO, UT  
 West - WA, OR, CA, AK

If you are interested in working in this exciting position contact NCEMSF Secretary, Michael Wiederhold, at [secretary@ncemsf.org](mailto:secretary@ncemsf.org).

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### Information, Continued from page 3

membership. All we ask in return is that you ensure that your information in our database, as well as the information regarding your campus EMS organization, are kept up-to-date.

We welcome your questions or comments about the new NCEMSF databases and server technology. Contact me by e-mail at [webmaster@ncemsf.org](mailto:webmaster@ncemsf.org) or call NCEMSF at 208-728-7342.

## NCEMSF 1999 Annual Income/ Expense Report

1/1/99 - 12/31/99

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<b>Income</b>	
Directory Income (ads)	360.00
Dues:	
Corporate Sponsors	850.00
Institutional	1005.00
Student	340.00
Non-Student	90.00
Life (Student)	400.00
Life (Non-Student)	400.00
	<hr/>
Total Dues	3,445.00
NCEMSF merchandise orders:	397.65
	<hr/>
Total Income	3,842.65
<b>Expenses</b>	
1999 Conference Awards	394.02
EMS Week 1998 (left-over)	17.81
EMS Week 1999	548.75
E Fax	18.95
P.O. Box	66.00
Institutional mailing	100.15
Student mailing	241.70
Office Supplies/Postage	618.10
Corporate Sponsor Mailing	648.62
Computer- Domain Registry	35.00
	<hr/>
	2689.10

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We currently reach every Collegiate EMS Group in the country and the future healthcare providers of tomorrow.

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# Missing Members

NCEMSF has lost contact with the following campus EMS alumni. If you know where they are please contact us or have them contact us, so that they can stay informed about NCEMSF activities.

**Name**

Charles Anthe  
Andrew Brown  
Steven Butler  
Jeff Carico  
Frank Centomain  
Rob Chiarlanza  
Wendy Cook  
Alyssa Dalke  
Jennifer Davis  
Bradley Denison  
Daniel DiPietro  
Kashta Dolphin  
Adam Dworkin  
Joseph Espino  
Jenney Eyster  
Peter Fegles  
Michael Forsyth  
Ken French  
Ted Hahn  
Travis Hamlyn  
Andrew Hawthorn  
Tabbi Heavner  
Andrea Herrmann

**School**

Carnegie Mellon University  
University of Hartford  
Whitewater University  
Marshall University  
Westchester University  
Westchester University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Bethany College  
Kent State University  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
West Chester University  
ACERT  
Vanderbilt University  
University of Central Florida  
Sunny - Cortland  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Kent State University  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Kings College  
Pacific University  
Emory University  
University of Hartford  
University of Rhode Island

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Jamison Hughes  
David Jackson  
Joe Juisai  
Josh Katz  
Evan Keats  
Jensen Keith  
Mark Kranis  
Aaron Kump  
John Maddox  
M Jason Malatesta  
Robert Merrill  
Mark O'Connell  
Chris Ogin  
Cory Orosz  
Craig Phillips  
Louis Rotkowitz  
Lisa Ryder  
Eric Sahota  
Lowell Schmeltz  
Christopher Selgas  
Mark Sirkus  
Jed Smith  
Curt Sterling  
Jason Verdolino  
Dan Waterhouse  
Porter Welch  
Staci Welcher  
Bradley Wilson  
Lorene Yoxheimer

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University of Hartford  
Johns Hopkins University  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
University of Hartford  
University of Hartford  
Western Carolina University  
Lehigh University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Colby College  
TCNJ  
University of Rhode Island  
Sunny Cortland  
Rowan University  
Cortland State  
Springfield College  
University of Delaware  
Rochester Institute of Tech  
Johns Hopkins University  
University of Michigan  
University of Delaware  
Bucknell University  
West Chester University  
RIT  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
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Syracuse University  
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