

Smith Rock

# Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

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### Post-Annual Meeting Buzz—

To start off the week the AMGA, in cooperation with the Certified Guides Federation, hosted an inaugural "meeting of the minds". Nearly 30 regional guides and guide service owners gathered...

### TC Report

There are some new items I would like to discuss: ice climbing as an important element in AMGA Alpine courses and exams; continuing education and additional educational offerings (such as a mechanized ski guiding course); and minimum standards for certified guides in all disciplines.

### Farewell from Former AMGA President

This is my last article as AMGA President; it's been a privilege to serve you all and I hope I have. My two terms as Board member are over and I'm looking forward to getting in a little more climbing and, more importantly, a lot more time with my young kids.

Vol. XXIV No. 16 Fall 2008

## Smith Rock, Oregon ~ 2008 Annual Meeting

by Katie Kelly



Angela Hawse, Mark Hammond,  
Keith Garvey and Erik Deberg

and desire to the board as they continue on to their second term. We would also like to congratulate the new AMGA Treasurer and Secretary, Scott Soden and Evan Stevens respectively. Both gentlemen are new Board officers and we are excited to have them take these positions. Lastly, we would like to extend a big welcome to new board members Mijka Burhardt, Clint Cook, and Dick Jackson.

**On another note, we would like to thank our Title Sponsor, W.L. Gore, and Opening Night Sponsor, Marmot.** A big thanks goes out to Arc'teryx, Black Diamond, Brooks-Range, Five Ten, Mammut, Mountain Hardwear, Patagonia, Petzl, The North Face, Redmond Air Center, WMTC, and WMI. Also, we would like to thank Kyle and Cindy Lefkoff for their contribution to this year's meeting as well as their continued support of the AMGA. Many thanks go out to Julie and Pete Keane, Jim Ablao & Chockstone Climbing for all their help and support in organizing this year's annual meeting.

**We were delighted** that Evan Stevens was able to be our presenter at the 2008 meeting. Evan presented a phenomenal slide show at our Main Event at the Terrebonne Depot. It was a true pleasure having Evan as the guest of honor. We could not have done it without him!

Thanks to Margaret Wheeler, Jim Ablao, Nike Pope and crew for organizing another incredible Guide Olympics.

### Mark your calendars...

Next year's Annual Meeting will be in **Moab, Utah ~ Oct. 24-26, 2009**. For all of you that made it to Oregon – I look forward to seeing you again...and for the rest of you AMGA folks, please join us for a great weekend of splitter cracks and sandstone in Moab!

### AMGA Welcomes 2009 Board of Directors:

Margaret Wheeler, John Race, Scott Soden, Evan Stevens, Majka Burhardt, Clint Cook, Adam Fox, Keith Garvey, Peter Gould, Angela Hawse, Rob Hess, Dick Jackson, Jim Pearson, Dale Remsberg, Pete Takeda, and John Winsor.

**Thank you past BOD Members** – John Bicknell, Phil Powers, and Jim Williams.

### AMGA 2008 Awards:

This year's award recipients were honored and celebrated at the Annual Meeting. We hope these awards will continue to inspire members of the guiding community and their endeavors to "represent a strong, unified voice for high standards of the professionalism of guiding and climbing instruction in the United States".

**The Lifetime Achievement in Guiding Award** went to **Bela Vadasz**.

**The Outstanding Guide of the Year Award** went to **Keith Garvey**.

**The President's Award** honored **Matt Farmer, Dawn Glanc, Kevin Mahoney,** and **Bayard Russell** for their efforts on The Big Expedition for Cancer Research - unclimbed Mountain to Conquer.

### Winner of 2008 Guide Olympics

**Pimp Daddies:** Ben Haskell, Forrest McBrian, and Jeff Ward – who let their real skills shine at Rope de Dope Block, Smith Rock, OR.

**The AMGA 2008 Annual Meeting was a huge success!** We had a great turnout – great fall climbing, good food and wonderful people. The atmosphere was productive and fun. The professional development clinics went smoothly and the AMGA raised over \$4,500 with the silent auction and raffle. Overall it was a great event and would not have been possible without the help of a lot of folks.

**At this year's Board Meeting it was exciting** to once again experience a great member turnout. The Annual Meeting confirmed that as the AMGA continues to reach out to the larger guiding community, we must continue to improve the key benefits of our membership, education, and certification programs.

**The AMGA is proud to announce** that Margaret Wheeler is the new President of the AMGA and John Race is our new Vice President. Margaret and John both bring self-knowledge, commitment



2008 AMGA Award Recipients:  
Keith Garvey and Bela Vadasz



Guide Olympics





## AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Newsletter Deadline

The Mountain Bulletin is Published in February, May, August, November. The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published February 13, 2009.

Deadlines for all submissions in 2009, including advertising are: January 9th(winter issue) April 10th (spring issue) July 10th(summer issue) October 9th(fall issue)

### Newsletter Contributors:

**Katie Kelly** is the AMGA Membership Director.

**Betsy Novak** is the AMGA Executive Director.

**Henry Beyer** is the AMGA Program Director.

**Ed Crothers** is the AMGA Accreditation Director.

**Rob Hess** serves as the Technical Director of the AMGA. He is IFMGA certified and is the senior guide/owner of Jackson Hole Mountain Guides.

**Margaret Wheeler** is President of the AMGA, an IFMGA Guide and an instructor for the AMGA.

**Keith Garvey** is the President of the Certified Guides Federation, an AMGA Board member, an instructor for the AMGA and is an IFMGA Guide.

**Dale Remsberg** is an IFMGA Guide, an instructor for the AMGA, serves on the AMGA BOD and CGF BOD.

**John Bicknell** is the former AMGA President, a Certified Rock and Alpine Guide and a Diamond Partner of the AMGA.

### National Office Staff

Executive Director: Betsy Novak

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Membership Director: Katie Kelly

Accreditation Director: Ed Crothers

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### Read this Disclaimer!

The AMGA, its officers and employees, authors, editors, artists and volunteers assume no responsibility or liability for accuracy, effectiveness, or safety of any technique or advice described in this publication. It is the responsibility of the individual climber or guide to investigate technical techniques and evaluate them for safety and applicability.



## Presidents Report

by Margaret Wheeler



Hello Everyone,

I am honored and excited to be serving in the role of president! The strength and depth of the AMGA brand is growing every year, and there is

great momentum in the organization towards developing and improving the benefits to our members and the guiding and climbing instructor communities. This momentum is entirely due to the people involved; so I'd like to remind us all that going forward, we have these amazing resources:

A hard working and dedicated (not to mention smart and good looking) office staff.

A talented instructor/examiner pool (also smart and good looking) that works its collective ass off to provide the best guiding education possible.

A board and TC devoted to strengthening and supporting the organization professionally, technically, and financially.

The CGF, which has made great strides this year and is committed to working together to provide and improve access for certified guides

Looking forward, it seems that many of the challenges we have faced still remain: access, insurance, education. But I truly feel that we are at something of a defining moment. As an organization, the AMGA has the opportunity in the coming years to actively define the dominant paradigm of guiding and climbing instruction in the US. This paradigm can become one of cooperation and coordination; of leadership in environmental stewardship and access; and of national recognition as the provider of the highest technical and educational standards in this country.

If we are going to make a difference going forward, we must work together – guides and guide services, educators and instructors. I look forward to working with you all, and I hope to see you soon - at meetings, at round table discussions, and most of all, out in the mountains.

Board of Directors Dinner





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## Post-Annual Meeting Buzz— Riding the Wave of the Collective Conscience

by Betsy Novak, AMGA Executive Director



I just returned from the AMGA's Annual Meeting in Bend, Oregon and have to say it was definitely one of our greatest meetings yet! This was our first meeting ever to be held in the Northwest. The turnout was impressive and the enthusiasm contagious. The entire meeting was a huge success. Over 40 folks made their way to the opening event hosted by Pete and Julie Keane. The professional development clinics were well attended and went off without a hitch. The main event wel-

comed over 100 AMGA supporters and the Guides Olympics was one of the best yet! For the sake of the reader I have selected three (3) standout occasions to report on and will leave the rest of the exciting annual meeting details to Katie to report on for the Mountain Bulletin.

To start off the week the AMGA, in cooperation with the Certified Guides Federation, hosted an inaugural "meeting of the minds". Nearly 30 regional guides and guide service owners gathered at the Redmond Public Library and took part in a round table discussion that focused on local initiatives relative to the Northwest professional guiding community. During the input session attendees were asked to comment on issues affecting them. The most talked of topic was land access and government regulation for commercial guides. The AMGA is going to do its best to host more of these regional discussions in an attempt to unify the guiding the community by providing a forum for guides and guide services owners to exchange their views and keep updated on current initiatives the AMGA and CGF are working on. The AMGA is interested in learning about what issues your region is dealing with so please post comment on the AMGA forum page under Local Access Issues or give us a call.

The following day the Technical Committee met to discuss a number of items of business. Most interesting to me was the discussion about the Rock Instructor Course and Rock Instructor Exam movement skill standard that transpired after a proposal was brought to the table to change the standard from 5.10a to 5.9. I am in support of this proposal mainly because it is in more alignment with the current mission of the AMGA, it helps clearly define the certification levels relevant to the Mountain Guide Program and the Climbing Instructor Program, and it makes the Rock Instructor Course and Rock Instructor Exam more accessible to the growing population of professional outdoor educators and climbing instructors. This change would not affect the Rock Guide Program nor change the 5.10c movement standard. After a highly productive conversation the Technical Committee agreed to table the proposal until further communication between the Technical Director, Discipline Coordinators, Program Director and Executive Director. The AMGA would be very interested in hearing from our membership about this important topic. No decision has been made so now is the time to voice your opinion and tell us what you think. Please send comment to: Henry Beyer, "henry@amga.com, Rob Hess, "rob@jhmg.com, and me, betsy@amga.com.

Subsequent to the Technical Committee meeting was the Board Meeting. A great deal of time and energy on behalf of the board and office staff goes into orchestrating a productive board meeting. Despite all such effort, one is never quite sure how the meeting will unfold, so you do what you can and hope for the best. In this case, the meeting was a huge success- owed

in large part to the dedicated members who sat on the sideline for the duration of the meeting (nearly 8 hours) and offered their insight, inquiries and enthusiasm.

Here is a recap of a few of the meeting highlights: the 2009 budget was approved, the revised conflict of interest policy was accepted, a nominations committee was formed, five (5) new board members were seated, the officer slate was reconfigured, and a new President was elected! (For a play by play of the board meeting check out the meeting minutes found on the AMGA website.)

It is a huge honor to announce that Margaret Wheeler is the new President of the AMGA. Over the past two and a half years I have had the opportunity to work with Margaret on a number of initiatives and I have to admit her tireless efforts, extraordinary energy levels, and intellectual capacity never cease to amaze me. The fact that Margaret is the 2nd, out of only four (4), women to gain her IFMGA Mountain Guide Certification in the United States is a testament of her tenacity and her strength. I can say with great confidence that the AMGA is in good hands with Margaret Wheeler as the new president.

Beside every great president stands a quality team of officers and directors who help steer the organization in the right direction. I am proud to announce: John Race as our new Vice President, Scott Soden as our new Treasurer, and Evan Stevens as our new Secretary. I have witnessed first-hand the work of these three (3) dedicated board members and have no doubt that the AMGA will do well by their direction. I am also proud to announce that Majka Burhardt, Clint Cook and Dick Jackson as our newly elected board members. It is a privilege for me to be able to work with all these talented individuals. I have already learned a great deal from their expertise and am excited to see what the future holds with the lot of them, the rest of our board, and of course the members, guiding our organization.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the nominees that ran in this years election. I was very impressed by the slate and know that anyone of the candidates would have done an exceptional job serving on the AMGA Board of Directors. It is apparent to me that Nate Disser, Brady Robinson, Joey Thompson, Todd Rutledge, Dave Secunda, Jon Tierney, and Scott Strode are committed to the mission and overall success of our organization. I know they will continue to serve as ambassadors of the AMGA in whatever capacity they can and I hope to see each of them run for the board next year.

## TC Report

by Rob Hess

Hi all, I trust your fall has been enjoyable and filled with substantial personal climbing time. Personal time on the rock is extremely important and a time I value greatly, especially in the fall after a long run of guiding activity. I am sitting here on a rest day in Moab, thinking about the upcoming winter and the items we recently discussed at the Technical Committee meeting and Instructor Pool training session at the annual meeting in Bend, Oregon. There are some new items I would like to discuss: ice climbing as an important element in AMGA Alpine courses and exams; continuing education and additional educational offerings (such as a mechanized ski guiding course); and minimum standards for certified guides in all disciplines.

Ice climbing is an important component of our alpine discipline and one we try hard to address on our alpine courses and exams. Movement skills assessment insures a base level standard and is a necessary aspect of all disciplines. We currently assess individual's movement skills on all courses and exams but have been more regimented in the administration of the assessment on the advanced courses/aspirant exams and certification exams. Ice climbing skills have been a prerequisite for entering the alpine program, and are an aspect of American guiding that is very active in certain regions. The venues we use and have available to the alpine program are limited when looking for objectives that develop and or test ice climbing guiding skills.

Many of you are aware that other countries, including Canada, have water ice climbing components in their programs. We have pondered a water ice climbing component in our alpine program for some time and as a Technical Committee looking at insuring our programs are top notch, have resolved to add this to the AMGA alpine discipline as a required component. There are many details to work out, but we currently have a working model for this course through our ice climbing instructor course. We have decided to make this a course that will be taken between the alpine guide and advanced alpine guide courses. We intend to make this a requirement for the advanced alpine guide course as of the 2011 course season. This means that individuals will have one partial (2009) and two full (2010, 2011) ice climbing seasons to take this course. We intend to run this at a variety of times through out the winter in multiple venues and locations i.e.: Ouray, North Conway and perhaps through the Canadian course. With this course addition, we will be looking at cutting some days off the alpine program.

The next area of development is with the continuing education aspect of the AMGA. We have decided to make continuing education an expectation at the AMGA. This will be self-monitored to start. As we develop the AMGA web site, certified guides will be able to access their personal information to up date what they have done on a yearly basis to meet the continuing education expectation. We will post the expectations on the web site shortly.

On the continuing education note, we are developing a mechanized ski guiding course to be available as of 2010. We have much to work out here, but this will not be a requirement, rather a continuing education offering with credential...stay tuned. If you have some thoughts, ideas or would like to have input as someone in the field, please contact me asap.

Finally, we have what is referred to as the "minimum standard" for certified guides. This is discussed in detail in the course catalogue. We are in an interesting situation in the US when looking at the minimum standard. For many, they come to their first AMGA courses having al-

ready spent some time if not quite a deal of time guiding. This does not tend to happen in other countries as to be a guide means one must have gone through training and mentoring before doing so. We are trying to be ever more clear on this topic and are developing short videos that display the standard for the movement skills in the various disciplines. We hope to post these videos on the web site as a new resource. Also, we spent some time at an Instructor Pool training session this fall, trying to describe the minimum standard in each discipline in one paragraph. There is more extensive descriptions in the course catalogue, but this is what we came up with in each discipline:

A certified alpine guide should be able to guide a remote grade 4 route in reasonable conditions on mixed (rock, ice, snow, and glaciated) routes. Guides are expected to have a high level of personal experience and climbing ability at a minimum standard of 5.10-, WI 4, 5.8 in boots, M5 and A1. Guides should be capable of providing a safe, efficient, and rewarding experience for all levels of clients with appropriate ratios in all seasons.

A certified rock guide should be capable of guiding long complex rock routes up to 5.10+, A1 with multiple clients. This guide should be technically proficient with a variety of rock guiding applications for ascending and descending, and be able to efficiently manage multiple clients in 3rd and 4th class terrain. A certified guide must exhibit good judgment and decision-making skills, particularly regarding risk management.

A certified ski mountaineering guide must have the skiing ability to inspire respect in their clients through coaching, teaching, and modeling; uphill and downhill, in any terrain and conditions. This guide must be able to assess and manage risks and hazards in ski mountaineering terrain. A certified ski guide must have the skills to optimize clients' experience and reward by finding the best line for the goals and objectives of the day, uphill and downhill.

So there you have it! If you have any interest and or comments with regards to the mechanized ski course or any other for that matter please contact me.

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## Gear Review

### Karhu Storm BC Ski

By Vince Anderson



This was an interesting ski to test out as it is marketed as a “deep snow” and powder board. For sure, there are bigger and fatter skis out there that will out perform this ski in truly deep snow. But as a guide, you’re typically not looking to go Mach 7 and make 3,000 feet into just three turns. So, the Storm does very well for skiing powder in a more traditional manner; i.e. it can make plenty of turns and can be skied at slower speeds. They seemed to do just about everything well, but did not excel in any particular area, either. They were fun in corn (but what isn’t?) and could hold an edge on hard pack, though at higher speeds, the soft tips would chatter and the tails would often wash out during the finish of the turn. Skiing them with a stiffer boot, would help out their performance on harder snow and/or higher speeds, but for typical guided skiing, this was not a problem. They were a joy to ski in powder and windbuff, but as mentioned above, would not fully open up well into higher speeds and preferred mid-radius length turns.

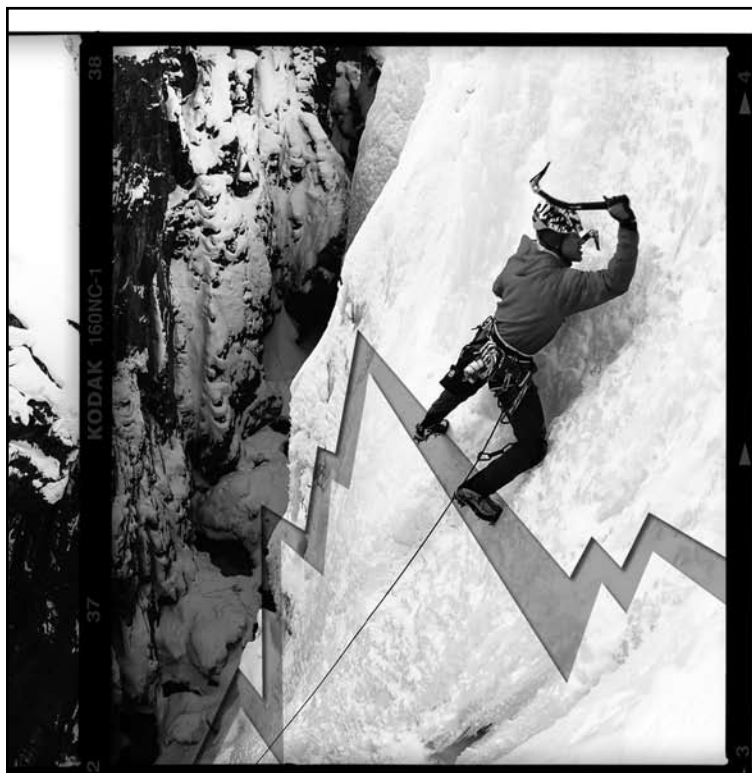
The skis have a carbon laminate underfoot which helps provide a good deal of torsional stability. This is noticeable on the firm snow or on piste. There is still wood in the ski so don’t let the “carbon” moniker fool you. It is not ultra light, but plenty light enough for a mountain guide to haul up the hills all day long for

multiple days. The 96 mm waist gives good floatation even when skiing bottomless facets, however, the Dynafit crampons need to be modified (i.e. bent) to fit over them, though this is the case with all fat boards. It is an all around, backcountry ski that can do well in a wide variety of conditions. It would be a good contender for the “quiver of one” award for guides looking to get one ski to suit most of their back country needs.

### Karhu Spire Ski

By Dale Remsberg

Designed as a all mountain ski the Karhu Spire is a bit heavier than many of its counterparts- This weight and stability help it through most snow conditions and its generous sidecut allow it to still be a quick turner when needed. This ski likes the hardpack and crud and the solid wood core keeps it predictable at higher speeds although at 86mm underfoot it will float the pow when needed. I preferred taking this ski out when the conditions were a bit variable but I was not let down when we found 12 inches of fresh and it performed very well with big arcing turns at speed. Not a specialty ski but one to take out on any given day!



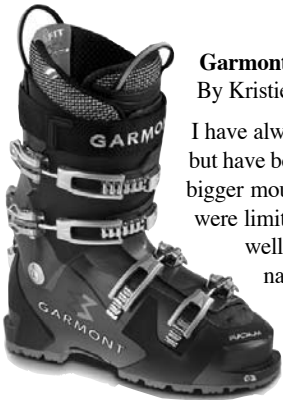
*For your mountain*

*Clint Cook wears the Barusa boot on Abriajgenew, WI 4+  
Upper Bridge Ouray Ice Park, Colorado  
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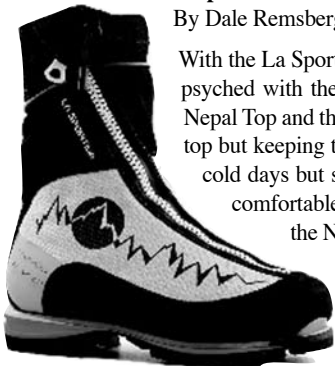
**Garment Radium AT Ski Boot**  
By Kristie Arend

I have always been happy with my comfy Scarpa Magic's for backcountry touring, but have been in search of a beefier, stiffer AT boot capable of driving my skis down bigger mountain steeps. Being a diehard fan of dynafit bindings, my boot choices were limited until the release of the Garment Radium. I needed a boot that toured well, but instilled confidence on steep descents. The new Garment Radium nailed this niche.

The Radium's I tested weighed in just a bit heavier than my husband's Mega Ride's, nonetheless, they were surprisingly comfortable and toured great right out of the box. The Radium sports a stiff overlapping tongue and four buckles to provide progressive support and great control – love the wrap around shell! At first they seemed hard to seed into place, but found this to be a nice feature when changing from skiing to tour mode. The locking mechanism prevents the annoying phenomena of loose buckles flapping in the air. A simple press of the release mechanism frees the buckle from its locked mode. In addition, Garment simplified the lean lock by allowing only one forward cant position at 24 degrees.

Overall, I would recommend the Garment Radium's to anyone wanting a comfortable AT boot whose downhill performance approaches that of a freeride set up. I can't wait to give the Radium's a full season of abuse this coming season!

**La Sportiva Batura Mountaineering Boot**  
By Dale Remsberg



With the La Sportiva's Nepal Top Evo being one of my most used boots I was super psyched with the release of the new Batura- The Batura fills the gap between the Nepal Top and the Spantik being a little warmer and more waterproof than the Nepal top but keeping the technical climbing ability. At first I only took the Batura out on cold days but soon enough they had won me over for most days as they were so comfortable and did not compromise any climbing functionality. Lighter than the Nepal Top and with a little more toe room the Batura was a great trail boot and the extra wiggle room kept my toes much warmer on those long icy belays! The flashy graphics and built in ergo zipper are a nice touch that over shadow the full functioning built in gaiter. All combined they definitely keep out the elements. These days with the tight airline weight restrictions I often have to pick only one boot for my travels and most often the Batura is that pick!

**Guide Olympics**




**KARHU**

Eric Henderson chases the Storm in Jackson. Photo by Steve Lloyd.

2008 **Backcountry** MAGAZINE **09 EDITOR'S CHOICE**

**KARHU STORM**

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## Certified Guides Federation Update

by Keith Garvey, CGF President

This is the first year the CGF operated and we are all looking forward to a bright future. Our membership ran a number of great trips throughout the US on CGF permitted and non-permitted lands as well as abroad. CGF guides were in Eldorado Canyon, Castle Valley, Indian Creek, Boulder Open Space, North Cascades National Park, Ouray's Pool Wall, and Smith Rocks to name a few. Some international venues where CGF guides operated were Peru, Nepal, France, and Switzerland. With '09 just around the corner we want to encourage you to join and help support this non-profit, as it is working on your behalf to open up access for AMGA certified guides.

The CGF annual meeting was held in Smith Rocks, OR a few days before the AMGA annual meeting. During this meeting, some new membership levels spawned and the quest continued for gaining more access for certified guides. We are excited about the upcoming season and hope you can show your support by becoming a member. Below is a list of current permits the CGF holds and permits presently in the works.

### Current CGF permits:

- Eldorado Canyon State Park
  - North Cascades National Park
  - Ouray Ice Park, CO (20 days) lottery system, Unlimited Members receive priority
  - Mohonk Mountain Preserve, NY
  - Boulder Open Space, CO
  - Devil's Tower, WY
  - Pisgah National Forest, NC
  - Moab, UT BLM (Castle Valley, Wall Street)
  - Monticello, UT BLM (Indian Creek)
  - Smith Rocks, OR
  - New River Gorge, WV
  - Rocky Mountain National Park, CO (through the Colorado Mountain School)
  - Non-permitted lands in the US (List is presently being put together)
- International guiding

### Permits in the works:

- Chugach BLM, AK (Thompson Pass)
- Canada National Parks (Banff, Yoho, Glacier, Kootenay) Expecting this permit to be valid April '09
- Squamish, Canada
- Bugaboos, Canada
- White Mountain National Forest, NH
- Seneca Rocks, WV

We are working hard to open up more access for CGF members and could use your help. If there is a key permit in your area please notify us so we can help you gain access. It is with your help that we will start to see more available terrain for certified guides.

### CGF membership levels:

There are several key changes this year for our membership. Now a CGF membership lasts one year from the date of purchase, not for the calendar year. This means you can join in November and know your

membership is good until the following November. This new policy will also apply to all existing and new members who joined in '08.

Membership levels have changed starting Oct. 31, 2008. We had very generous membership levels for the first year in operation. There are a couple of reasons why this occurred. First, our insurance policy came later than expected so we did not start accepting members until March 1, 2008, and do to this permits came at a much later date as well. With the organization fully functioning and member benefits continually increasing, the cost of basic membership has increased and the highest level of membership has stayed the same. We want our membership to know this will not happen regularly. The cost benefit is actually quite amazing even with the new membership levels. A "15 Day Member" is only paying \$30 per day for insurance and permits, only \$25 per day at the "30 Day Membership", and we'll let you do the math being an "Unlimited Member" (we hope you can take full advantage of it)!

### Unlimited Member: \$1,000

This level provides members unlimited guiding days. This member would have priority over permits with limited user days (i.e. Ouray Ice Park)

### 30 Day Member: \$750.

A 30 day member can use all of the CGF benefits for 30 guide days. This is for 30 guide days, not 30 user days (this means a guide with 3 clients counts as one guide day). A member at this level can upgrade to an Unlimited Membership for \$400 if they run over the 30 day maximum.

### 15 Day Member: \$450

A 15 day member can use all of the CGF benefits for 15 guide days. This is for 15 guide days, not 15 user days (this means a guide with 3 clients counts as one guide day). A member at this level can upgrade to a 30 day Membership for (an additional) \$400 if they run over the 15 day maximum or upgrade straight to Unlimited for \$800.

### Supporting Member: \$100 and up

This is for someone interested in supporting the organization that will not use any of the benefits.

### '08 Associate Membership upgrades:

Members who joined in '08 under the Associate Membership at \$300 for 20 guide days have the option to purchase 10 more days by upgrading their membership to the 30 guide day level for \$250 (totaling what the "30 Day Member" costs per day is: \$25 per day x 10 days = \$250) or to Unlimited Membership for an additional \$700.

Please check out [www.certifiedguidesfederation.org](http://www.certifiedguidesfederation.org) for more information and please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions. We are looking forward to gaining more access throughout the United States and abroad with your help.

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## Attention AMGA Members, Guides and Instructors!

*Come join our pool of providers for the Climbing Wall Instructor Course. Anyone can become a CWI provider as long as you meet the prerequisites...*

The following provider training courses will be held at the Boston Rock Gym

**CWI Provider Courses 11/17-18/2008, 12/8-9/2008**

Also, you can take the CWI course: **CWI Courses 11/8-9/2008, 12/6-7/2008**

All at the Boston Rock Gym in Woburn, MA. Courses can be scheduled in any location if there is sufficient interest. For prerequisites to join the provider pool: [http://www.amga.com/programs/CWIprovider\\_training.php](http://www.amga.com/programs/CWIprovider_training.php)

If you have questions please contact the office 303-271.0984 OR Joe Lentini, Climbing Wall Instructor Discipline Coordinator: **Joe Lentini** [lentini@roadrunner.com](mailto:lentini@roadrunner.com) 603-662-7024



*"if the truth were known about climbing rubber, there would be only one rock shoe company."*

- Ivo Ninov

Photo by James O. Martin

## Program Update

by Henry Beyer



One of my duties as Program Director is to report to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on how programs have progressed throughout the year and what are some goals for the coming year. Despite the fact that 2008 was a learning experience for me, AMGA programs continued to improve. Here are the high lights!

Each year more and more guides earn one form of certification on the other.

The certification tally for this year (to date) is: IFMGA Guide (12), Alpine Guide (12), Rock Guide (15), Ski Mountaineering Guide (14), Rock Instructor (6), Single Pitch Instructor (177), and Climbing Wall Instructor (78). Over half the membership, approximately 775, hold one form of certification or another. We had more participants per course than we have had in recent history. The guides of tomorrow are seeking out training not just from on the job training and mentorship but from formalized guide education. The SPI program in its first year has been a resounding success, due in large part to the untiring efforts of the Discipline Coordinator, Adam Fox. There was a 30% increase in SPI program offerings(106) in 2008 compared to TRSM offerings(75) in 2007 which corresponds to a 44% increase in the total number of participants(458) in SPI programs in 2008 compared to the number of TRSM participants(303) in 2007. In its second year the Climbing Wall Instructor program, piloted by John Bicknell and Joe Lentini, continues to make great strides. Since the start of the program there have been 122 participants and of those 109 have earned their Climbing Wall Instructor Certification. The list goes on!!

As for goals for 2009, the AMGA will try and respond to areas of improvement high-lighted in the recent Program Survey. Efforts will be made to improve pre- and post-course materials as well to lower course ratios where possible. Reducing program cost is always a contentious issue and will remain a top priority.

It was good to see old faces and meet new meet folks out at the Annual Meeting!! For those that didn't make it, I look forward to crossing paths in the future.

Until then, Be Well!!

**Henry Beyer, AMGA Program Director, welcomes participants on first day of Professional Development Clinics at the Annual Meeting.**





## AMGA CWI Program Update

by John Bicknell

Over the last 18 months, the AMGA and Climbing Wall Association have developed a pilot certification program for climbing wall instructors and pursued a partnership to develop the Program. The Pilot Program has been highly successful and over a hundred participants have taken either the Climbing Wall Instructor's course or the Climbing Wall Provider's course. The AMGA remains in full support of the Climbing Wall Program and will continue to develop it.

Recently, the Climbing Wall Association informed the AMGA that they did not wish to pursue the partnership. We were disappointed to learn the news and would have appreciated the opportunity to work with the Climbing Wall Association. Nonetheless, there are advantages to the AMGA serving as the sole managing entity.

The American Mountain Guides Association is now able to advance the Climbing Wall Program more quickly and efficiently. Now, course paperwork will be processed more quickly, certifications should be sent out in a timely manner, the mechanics of Program Management should move forward swiftly. In addition, host facilities will no longer be required to be a member of the Climbing Wall Association, thus broadening the range of locations for course providers and decreasing the cost. The application for UIAA endorsement of the program is being revised to reflect the new situation and conversations with the UIAA indicate the process should go smoothly.

We believe the Climbing Wall Program meets a training need in the U.S. and we look forward to its continued evolution. Our goal is to grow the CWI Provider pool to ensure we are capable of meeting the growing need for this type of training and education. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Climbing Wall Program please contact the AMGA office for more information.

### AMGA CWI Program Update

Numbers 01/01/08-10/01/08

The Climbing Wall Instructor program has left its pilot phase and is moving along at full-speed. AMGA's split with the Climbing Wall Association had concerned some, but I believe it is apparent the AMGA is dedicated to the success of this program and this should help quell these concerns. The first year numbers of the CWI program are considerably greater than any other AMGA program in its first year of operation.

Grand Totals for Climbing Wall Instructor Program as of 10/01/08

**Current CWI Providers: 13**

**CWI Programs Offered: 17**

**CWI Course Participants: 107**

**Have Earned CWI Certification: 98**

### Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Program

*Provided by American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA)*

The AMGA has developed a program to train and evaluate indoor climbing wall instructors. Upon successful completion of the course the participants will receive a certification as a certified Climbing Wall Instructor. The course will be a minimum of twenty hours of instruction, skills demonstration, and evaluation.

The course will address the technical skills necessary to manage an instructional program at an indoor / artificial climbing wall facility, and will address the following general topic areas:

**Instructor roles, responsibilities and professionalism**

**Client orientation and instruction**

**Risk management**

**Lesson planning**

**Teaching basic climbing skills including movement**

**Teaching lead climbing skills**

**Teaching top-rope and lead belaying techniques**

**Equipment and facility use**

**Rescue and emergency procedures**

The course is available for lead and non lead instructors.

This is a recognized entry-level program for the AMGA

For more information about this program or to schedule, please visit the AMGA website at:

[http://www.amga.com/programs/climbing\\_wall\\_instructor.php](http://www.amga.com/programs/climbing_wall_instructor.php)





## Farewell from Former AMGA President

by John Bicknell

This is my last article as AMGA President; it's been a privilege to serve you all and I hope I have. My two terms as Board member are over and I'm looking forward to getting in a little more climbing and, more importantly, a lot more time with my young kids. I have found serving on the AMGA Board fulfilling, but it will be a few years before I consider running again. I have great confidence that Margaret Wheeler will make a great President, John Race a great Vice President, and that the progress the AMGA has made the last few years will continue.

I want to thank everyone for their help over the last six years. I've worked closely with many on the Board, I've worked with two great ED's, I tried hard as President to travel and meet (and listen) to guides all over the country. Thank you for sharing your ideas and letting me know what you wanted from your professional organization.

Jim Williams and Phil Powers are also off the Board after this meeting. Both have been excellent Board members, bringing energy, strong opinions, and proposals before the Board regularly. The three of us worked together on the present Strategic Plan and Phil and I worked together again on the new Mission Statement and the ED Search Committee. Jim's expedition business and Phil's AAC duties meant neither could attend every Board meeting but both always honored their AMGA commitments—I've never forgotten Jim calling from Aconcagua by sat phone to join a finance committee meeting, or Phil agreeing to be drafted for another year after Maury McKinney's unexpected resignation last fall.

I believe AMGA members did a great job this fall selecting new Board members. John and Margaret were elected to second terms. Majka Burhardt was elected for her first term—she's one of the most talented people I know and she'll bring a lot to the Board. IFMGA guide Clint Cook rejoins after a couple of years off. Dick Jackson returns, which is fantastic; Dick has done as much for the AMGA over the years as anyone, ever.

So what's been important the last three years and what, in my opinion, is important now? What comes next?

### AMGA Direction

Several years ago now, then ED Mike Alkatis expressed the fundamental question facing the AMGA—would we choose to be an exclusive (but small) organization serving IFMGA guides or would we become a national organization representing all professional climbing and backcountry skiing instructors. Almost everyone I spoke with wanted the latter and in the last three years the AMGA has taken huge strides in that direction. The Single Pitch program is more successful than it has ever been, the Climbing Wall Instructor program has been created and well received, and the AMGA has actively reached out to the climbing instructor world—experiential education, university climbing programs, summer camps, rock clubs, and the volunteer alpine clubs. We have also created a joint program with the PSIA that should move beyond the pilot stage this winter. Our new mission statement reflects this: **The American Mountain Guide's Association (AMGA) is the premier source for training, credentials, and services for professional mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States.**

It's obvious, I believe this to be the right direction for the AMGA. It is how we best serve the public—a lot more people learn climbing in gyms and from climbing instructors. It's how we can grow and have the national voice and significance to influence national policy decisions regarding access and land management. And it's how we best create public awareness around the value of AMGA certification and

training, which is how we create a true profession and sustainable careers.

### Access and the CGF

The single most important moment in the history of the AMGA was our acceptance into the international community of mountain guides in 1997, into the IFMGA. Part of that was our promise to work toward full access for IFMGA guides in the United States. Three years ago Dick Jackson and Boots Ferguson helped create the CGF, the Certified Guide Federation, which today is starting to move and holds a number of important permits which are open to any guide who is a CGF member (I am, are you?) and is AMGA certified in the appropriate terrain. Considerable challenges remain, both for access in general and for the CGF. Many of you want the AMGA to simply reabsorb the CGF—understand the AMGA cannot and keep its present non-profit status, which is a crucial part of our fundraising and our business model; it allows us to keep our training programs affordable for guides. I was incredibly heartened at the Bend Annual Meeting when an IFMGA guide, a long-time immigrant from Europe, listened to the progress of the CGF and said that for the first time he felt hope, felt that we may finally be starting to crack the access code. The AMGA cannot reabsorb the CGF but it is crucial that we continue to support it and also continue to put energy into access issues in other ways.

### University Affiliation


I floated this idea in the spring Mountain Bulletin, certainly it is not a new one. I have heard from a lot of people about this, no one is in opposition, everyone in support—both in the guiding and university communities. As usual, the devil is in the details-- what is this eventual affiliation going to look like? Several university representatives attended this fall's meeting; ED Betsy Novak and I will meet more at the AORE (Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education) conference in late October.

I can imagine three levels of college affiliation; the AMGA Board has agreed to pursue the first two. At the lowest rung, college outdoor departments begin running AMGA climbing instructor (climbing wall, single pitch) and level one guide programs using AMGA Instructor Pool members. The AMGA


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(continued from page 11 Farewell...)

should be encouraging this and it is already happening. It is completely in harmony with our decision to reach out to the climbing instructor community.

At the next level, the AMGA seeks affiliation with a college outdoor department whereby all AMGA members can choose to receive college credit for AMGA Programs if they wish. They would also be eligible for student loans and aid. Over time, this relationship could grow and guiding could be part of a degree path at universities with AMGA programs and in-college courses both being part of the degree (imagine courses in outdoor leadership, experiential education, small business management and marketing for example). This is in some ways similar to the relationship NOLS has with the University of Utah. There is a faculty advisor at Utah who manages the relationship. It is a program under the Department of Tourism and Recreation. Obviously, NOLS maintains its own separate office staff and administration.

The third level, the one the ACMG has with Thompson River University, would involve complete submersion within a university system. This would require a major restructuring of the AMGA office as it exists. No one is pursuing this third level of partnership at this time but the AMGA Board agreed at the Bend meeting to create a committee to pursue the first two and research the third. The Universities we've been in contact with have been equally enthusiastic and positive. This is an idea whose time has come, and I believe the new Board is committed to it.

#### **Conclusion**

The essential job of the AMGA Board and President is keeping the organization focused on its mission and its plan for following that mission. It's probably time for the new Board to rewrite the Strategic Plan, but I'll close with what now exists—here are the main points.

#### **Unify the guiding community in the US and within the AMGA.**

This needs to be rewritten to reflect the outreach towards climbing instructors and ski guides but the growth of the AMGA over the last few years points to our progress toward this goal.

#### **Continue to strengthen the education and testing programs.**

The major restructuring of the training program in 2007 was in pursuit of this goal. I have not

referred to it above because it was much more the work of TD Rob Hess and the TC than the AMGA Board.

#### **Improve the benefits of membership**

The ultimate benefit would be the creation of a profession that would allow its members to create sustainable life-long careers and in many cases we are not there yet. It saddened me in Bend to meet a former CMS guide who is AMGA rock and alpine certified but working as a contractor in Bend because that is how he can best make a living. But creating a University alliance would certainly serve this goal.

#### **Continue to develop the long term financial stability of the organization.**

No organization can serve its members or achieve its goals if it's bankrupt. The AMGA is financially stable, which not many non-profits (or for-profits) can say this fall. This is due in large part to wise financial advice from Board members past and present like Kyle Lefkoff and Scott Soden.

The AMGA is serving its mission and making progress towards its key goals. I'm proud to be a member and I look forward to watching its continued development. Thanks again, for all your help the last few years.

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## 2009 AMGA Scholarships

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) has partnered with outdoor industry leaders and private foundations to provide necessary financial support for guides seeking training and certification. The cost of pursuing professional training and certification can often be one of the greatest hurdles for an educator and technical mountain guide. Through the generous donations and continued commitment of members, private donors, and the business community, the AMGA is able to minimize the financial burden of training and certification by offering scholarships and memorial funds.

We encourage everyone to apply and take advantage of these opportunities. We will be accepting applications November 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009. We plan on having all scholarships be awarded on March 9th, 2009.

So, if you are interested in applying for the various scholarships offered through the AMGA, please keep in mind that **you will need to submit all required information by January 31, 2009!** Scholarship information, process and application is available on our website at [www.amga.com/programs/scholarships.php](http://www.amga.com/programs/scholarships.php) If you have any questions contact the office at 303.271.0984 OR [katie@amga.com](mailto:katie@amga.com).

### Scholarships Application & Process

All Applications **must be submitted electronically** to [katie@amga.com](mailto:katie@amga.com)

You must be enrolled in an AMGA program for your scholarship application to be accepted.

There is one general application that applies to all scholarships. However, you must submit a separate application for each program/course that you are enrolled in.

**All Scholarship Applications are due JANUARY 31, 2009.**

### AMGA Scholarships

- Arc'Teryx Scholarship: (Ski Discipline)
  - Backcountry Access Scholarship: (Ski Discipline)
  - Black Diamond Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - Chad VanderHam Memorial Fund: (Ski Discipline)  
– Video Submission
  - Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship: (IFMGA Certification)
  - Julie Cheney Culberson Educational Fund: (Women's scholarship)
  - Mammut Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - Marmot Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - Mike Hattrup/XO Net Scholarship: (Ski Mountaineering Discipline)
  - Montrail Scholarship: (Rock and Alpine Disciplines)
  - Mountain Hardwear Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - Osprey Scholarship (Any Discipline)
  - Patagonia Scholarship: (Women's Scholarship)
  - Petzl Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - The North Face Scholarship: (Alpine Discipline)
  - Walker Family Foundation Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
  - W.L. Gore Scholarship: (Any Discipline)
- In regards to handling 2009 winter ski guide courses, scholarship applicants will be asked to pay upfront and then once awarded a scholarship, the AMGA will be happy to reimburse you.

## 2008 AMGA Exam Graduates

### Certified IFMGA Guides:

- Adrian Ballinger (Ski)
- Steve Banks (Rock)
- Zoe Hart (Ski)
- Erik Leidecker (Ski)
- Bill Liberatore (Ski)
- Dave Miller (Ski)
- Jamie Pierce (Rock)
- Mike Poborsky (Ski)
- Mark Puleio (Ski)
- Neil Satterfield (Ski)
- Geoff Unger (Ski)

### AMGA Certified

#### Ski Mountaineering Guides:

- Mark Allen
- Adrian Ballinger (IFMGA)
- Mike Bromberg
- Zoe Hart (IFMGA)
- Bill Liberatore (IFMGA)
- Erik Leidecker (IFMGA)
- Mark Kelly
- Dave Miller (IFMGA)

--Nat Patridge

- Mike Poborsky (IFMGA)
- Mark Puleio (IFMGA)
- Neil Satterfield (IFMGA)
- Joe Stock
- Geoff Unger (IFMGA)

### AMGA Certified Rock Instructors:

- Chad Cochran
- Karsten Delap
- Geir Hundal
- Kevin Johnson
- Glenn Pinson
- Joe Vitti

### AMGA Certified Rock Guides:

- Steve Banks (IFMGA)
- Ian Boyer
- Dan Corn
- Adam George
- Dawn Glanc
- Ian Nicholson
- Patrick Ormond

### AMGA Certified Alpine Guides:

- Marc Beverly
- Scott Brown
- Tim Brown
- Peter Doucette
- Angela Hawse
- Seth Hobby
- Steve Johnson
- Pete Keane
- Marty Molitoris
- Silas Rossi
- Constantine Severis
- Chris Simmons

We'd also like to congratulate all of those who became certified as a Single Pitch Instructor and/or Climbing Wall Instructor in 2008. Due to space limitations we are unable to name all of those who successfully earned certification.



## Luxury or Necessity?

by Dale Remsberg

I'm talking about radios in the backcountry. In the front country cell phones work fine for communication in case of an Emergency, but with the recent reduction of analog service their range has been greatly reduced. Also not many phone companies even produce an analog compatible phone anymore so as we break our phones and need to upgrade most have to go with a full digital phone. Of Course there are some options other than radios but they are either cost prohibitive or not as versatile. Satellite phones are nice but can be very expensive but are probably still the best option for very remote expeditions. Devices like the Spot look promising but don't have the versatility as radios or satellite phones. Technology is worth keeping an eye on but for the moment I still think radios offer the most options.

I have worked the past two seasons in the Canadian Rockies and while visiting with a local guide he asked me what type of radio I was using- Hmm- I knew radios were common practice in many regions but I had not purchased one yet and was a little afraid to admit I was radio free. To make a short story even shorter I said was in the market but had not bit the bullet yet- The look on his face was surprising- Basically he said it was considered negligent to not carry a radio. If a guide had to choose between a first aid kit and a radio they would be expected to carry a radio. I had to think about that but in the

long run he was right, there was not much I could do about life threatening injuries with a light backcountry first aid kit and anything I could do with it could probably be dealt with group gear and duct tape. But if a client of mine needed definitive care there is no probably better way to communicate with rescue agencies than with a VHF radio. That night I was on the phone with a radio store in Calgary and had the new little gem in my hands the next afternoon- it was nice and sexy and "open" but it did not solve my dilemma all together. I still needed to learn how to use and program the micro radio- Easier said than done but a little legwork and much time on Google and I had the local frequencies programmed into my new toy.

This spring in Alaska the radio proved very valuable in communication with flight services (not to mention a little rock and roll to ease the stress of our route) and recently Colorado Mountain School guides were granted use of Rocky Mountain National Park's repeater for emergency use.

I have yet to get my technician license with the FCC but I have been studying and hope to test soon- Hopefully the AMGA will get a FCC frequency again for guide to guide communication and radios will start to find themselves into all American guides packs.

Stay in touch!!!

Guide Olympics team "Always Getting Lei'd"



Opening Night at Julie and Pete Keane's house: office pumpkins



Guide Olympics team "Business Time"



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