



MOUNTAIN BULLETIN



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Margaret Wheeler

Since our last AMGA board meeting in January, there have been some excellent conversations going on about the AMGA, the IFMGA, and the CGC. I would like to offer a vision for the future landscape of the AMGA, and the relationships between the AMGA, the IFMGA, and the CGC.

As you all know, the conversations about how to work together seem to digress all too quickly into a fight about who should support whom, and which one is good and which one is bad.

But take a long breath and ponder this: If you strip away all the politics, and the history, and the emotions, and the past battles, I think the following statements are true:

- 1 Training and certification for mountain guides to a professional standard is a Good Idea.
- 2 Active promotion and support of the profession of mountain guiding – an Access Director actively lobbying on behalf of credentialed guiding – is a Good Idea.
- 3 A cooperative structure to hold permits and insurance for mountain guides is a Good Idea.

Here's why:

There is a need for all three pieces of the puzzle, and the existence of the three together is necessary for the success of any single one of them. At our very core, we need training and certification of mountain guides to a professional standard. The AMGA has been working since 1979 to achieve this goal, and this continues to be the heart and soul of our organization.

We need an Access Director to educate the public and land managers about guiding and the value of AMGA technical standards and credentials (Certified Guides and Accredited Guide Services). We need to build and promote the

profession, and to quickly and professionally respond to issues that come up in the national arena.

We need an additional structure for guides to get permits and insurance – the permit system in the US is not going to go away, and you must have a business license and an insurance policy in order to participate in that system. Guide services are an integral part of our community, and we all need to work together. But to have every certified guide in the US start their own business and compete for permits would be helpful to no one. A cooperative structure fits in the existing system and supports the whole profession.

The future vision goes something like this: AMGA programs train and certify mountain guides with programs designed to the international standard and to meet the particular needs of American guides. The Access Director develops and implements a strategic plan to prioritize and then work – consistently and continuously, 5 days a week – on the issues that we have to deal with in this country. The AMGA Accreditation program upholds high business standards and links guide services to certification and the work being done to promote access. The Certified Guides Cooperative holds permits and insurance for AMGA and IFMGA certified guides, easing the pressure valve created by the permit system and providing the possibility of growth for AMGA certified guides and an outlet for reciprocal access for foreign IFMGA guides. All three work together to change and grow the way guiding happens in the US. *That* is what we are really after. *That* is why all three pieces of the puzzle need to exist.

The AMGA is an educational non-profit – it cannot hold permits for commercial

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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Program Director | **Henry Beyer**
Membership Director | **Josh Harrod**
Accreditation Director | **Ed Crothers**
Climbing Instructor Program Director | **Ed Crothers**
Access Director | **Leigh Goldberg**
Accountant | **Asha Nagda**

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.

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Photo Credits: Mark Houston, AMGA/IFMGA Certified Guide



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER – BETSY WINTER

Say it Loud, Say it Proud: Why Branding Matters

Join the American Mountain Guides Association in promoting the AMGA brand. Whether you are a certified member, accredited program or an associate there is a branding message right for you.

This abbreviated marketing toolkit will help members promote their certification and/or affiliation with the one and only organization that has been training and certifying guides and climbing instructors for 30 years.

Our goal is to help you gain access to public lands, attract clients and grow your business while simultaneously educating the general public about AMGA services and increasing visibility for the organization. In return this increases visibility for you and the training you have undergone or the credentials you hold that set you apart from the competition. How we all can take part in doing this is by helping build the right brand associations.

First things first, the AMGA logo, a colorful insignia that when used properly is the fastest way to grow brand recognition. For those of you who are unaware the AMGA has 8-trademarked credential-specific logos available for use by all certified members and accredited programs. In addition, we have recently developed a new logo for AMGA/IFMGA Certified Guides and two new logos specifically for the Climbing Instructor Program to be used by Single Pitch and Climbing Wall Instructor Providers when marketing their programs. All logos must be used in accordance with the AMGA Logo Use Policy and are a fast and proven way to up your marketing game. If unable to use the logo please remember there is a lot of power in your affiliation with the organization whether you have gone through a program or are a supporting member. Contact the office to request a copy of a high or low-resolution version of the logo or verbiage that is suitable for your affiliation or level of credential today.

List of credential-specific logos:

- AMGA/IFMGA Certified Mountain Guide
- AMGA Accredited Program
- AMGA Certified Alpine Guide

- AMGA Certified Climbing Wall Instructor
- AMGA Certified Rock Instructor
- AMGA Certified Rock Guide
- AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor
- AMGA Certified Ski Guide
- AMGA Certified Ski Mountaineering Guide

Program-related logos:

- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Provider
- AMGA Climbing Wall Instructor Provider

Next, the AMGA and IFMGA acronyms, the renowned nomenclature of our organization that we all should be cautious of how we use. After recent visits with a handful of National Park Service representatives it became very clear that we have a long way to go before the AMGA and all the varying postfaces that can be applied becomes accurately understood amongst land managers and industry affiliates.

Within the micro community of the outdoor industry it is typical to assume that when we throw out an acronym the receiver genuinely understands it. One might think that a reader of a national climbing magazine would know what it means to be, as an example, IFMGA certified, but what I am quickly learning is that most readers, land managers and potential clients do not. Most people are not aware that the only way to become an U.S IFMGA Guide is through the American Mountain Guides Association. Every time one of our guides promotes their international certification without recognizing the alma mater that provided their certification, they are eroding the foundation of that very certification and all other AMGA certifications.

On the same note, every time a guide or climbing instructor talks about being certified without including the American Mountain Guides Association in the subject matter, a valuable opportunity to educate an uninformed individual about the value of your certification is lost. Cutting right to the chase, most people (land managers, media contacts, potential clients) do not know what it means to be a certified rock guide, a certified IFMGA guide, what the difference

is between the two, or what organization provides training and certification for mountain guides and it is our job to make sure that they do.

Thirdly, a Brand Identity Statement (BIS) is a quick and easy way to give clarity to the brand and a fast-pitch sell in just a few short words. The AMGA's Brand Identity Statement is: *Training and Credentials for American Mountain Guides and Climbing Instructors*. Every time you are interviewed for an article, updating your Facebook or blog, or engaging in a casual conversation with someone you meet in the field you are selling something, and in the line of work we are in, I would guess you are selling yourself. If we want to have any hope of getting our message across, then we are going to have to find a way to make our audience remember what we said. In order to make our message stick it must be short and imply a great deal more than what it actually says. When referring to your training, credentials or affiliation with the AMGA using the BIS is a surefire way to leave a lasting impression. Along the same line the AMGA has adopted a few different taglines over the years worthy of consideration for use: *Leading the Way to your Guiding Career; Training and Certifying Guides for 30 Years; We Guide Guides; The Guiding Standard*.

Fourthly, the AMGA Mission is a succinct way of telling people what the AMGA does, who the AMGA does it for and how and why the AMGA does it. The AMGA's Mission is: *The AMGA inspires an exceptional client experience as the premier source for training, credentials, resource stewardship and services for professional mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States*. By sharing the mission you are broadening the reach of our message and helping the AMGA share its' values with future stakeholders.

Finally, the AMGA Vision Statement, a description of the AMGA values and what the organization is trying to accomplish. I can't express enough the importance of consistent messaging. Our goal is to keep everyone on

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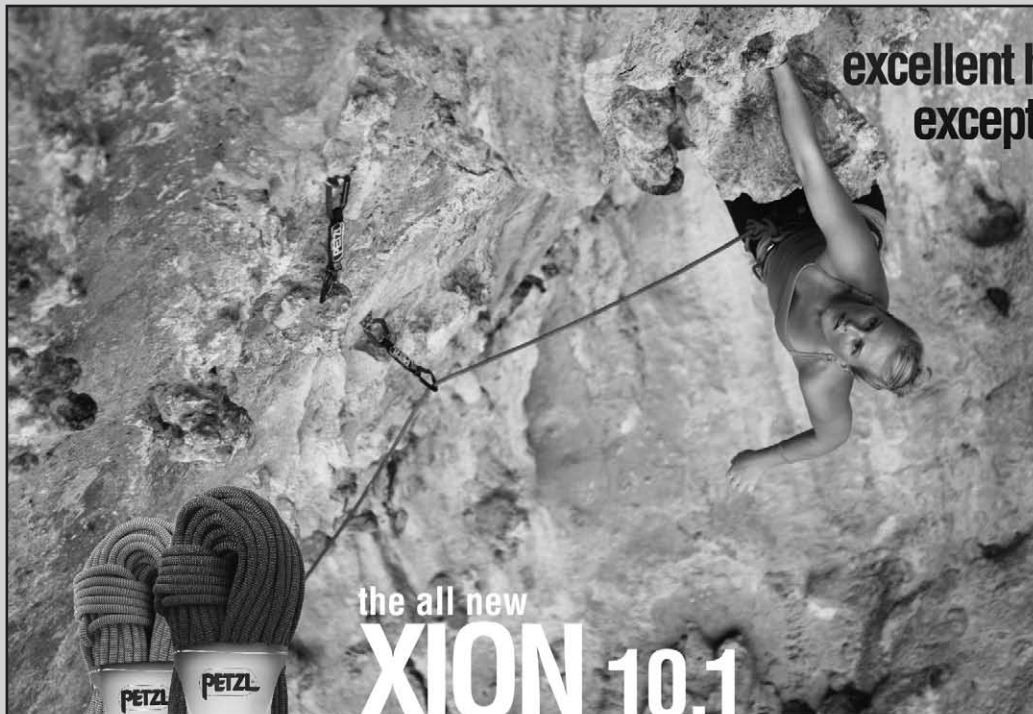
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PROGRAM DIRECTOR CORNER – HENRY BEYER

COURSE AND EXAM RESULTS

Over the past month I have had discussions with various individuals about Daily Marking Cards, Performance Evaluations and final course and exam results. In light of this, it seems appropriate to review what this all means. This Mountain Bulletin article touches on course and exam results. In the next Mountain Bulletin I will write about Daily Marking Cards, Final Marking Sheets and the posting of course and exam results.

In the course of discussing these issues there are references to pre-requisites, technical skills, movement skills, Aspirant Exam and assessment categories among others. There is not enough space to cover each one of these in detail now. If you would like more information about each of these areas you may find it on our website – www.amga.com.

Each course we offer includes some level of assessment. This article focuses on our guide level programs. I will address each of the three levels – entry-level courses, advanced-level courses and exams – independently.

Entry-level Courses (RIC, AGC, IIC, SGC)

The entry-level courses are the Rock Instructor Course, Alpine Guide Course, Ice Instructor Course and Ski Guide Course. The two possible course results are *Complete* and *Incomplete*. The instructors evaluate each student's performance throughout the course to verify whether or not each student meets the pre-requisites for the course.

Students who meet all of the pre-requisites for an entry-level course receive a *Complete* for the course. Students who do not meet one or more of the pre-requisites receive an *Incomplete*. Students who receive a *Complete* may proceed to the advanced-level course in that same discipline.

Students who receive an *Incomplete* for a course may be required to retake the entire course. More often though, students are required to demonstrate to an AMGA instructor, at a later date, that they have improved and now meet the pre-requisites for the course.

For example, Movement Skill is a common area in which students fail to meet the pre-requisite. When this happens, the student must be re-assessed by an AMGA instructor at a later date. If the student meets the Movement Skill standard upon re-assessment, then he or she may proceed to the next level course.

In each of the above scenarios, the instructor(s) may offer recommendations and add requirements, in addition, to those listed on our website. These must be completed, along with the pre-requisites listed on our website, prior to enrollment in the next level course.

Advanced-Level Courses (RGC, AAGC, SMGC)

The advanced-level courses are the Rock Guide Course, Advanced Alpine Guide Course and Ski Mountaineering Guide Course. The three possible course results are *Pass*, *Re-exam*, and *Not Pass*.

Each advanced-level course includes an Aspirant Exam. To pass the course, each student must pass the Aspirant Exam. If a student successfully does this, then he or she receives a Final Mark of *Pass* and may proceed to the exam.

If a student does not pass one or more sections of the Aspirant Exam, then he or she may receive a Final Mark of *Re-exam* for the course. These students must be re-assessed at a later date by an AMGA instructor.

In some situations, the instructors may deem a student's performance as too sub-standard and require that he or she retake the entire course again. If this happens, the student receives a Final Mark of *Not Pass* for that course.

Exams (RIE, RGE, AGE, SMGE)

The exams are the Rock Instructor Exam, Rock Guide Exam, Alpine Guide Exam and Ski Mountaineering Guide Exam. The final marks for AMGA exams are the same as for advanced-level programs. They are *Pass*, *Re-exam* and *Not Pass*.

The Final Mark is based on a student's daily performance in nine separate assessment categories during the course of a multi-day exam. In order to pass an exam, a student must receive an overall mark of *Pass* in each of the nine assessment categories. Furthermore, on the Alpine Guide Exam and Ski Mountaineering Guide Exam students must also pass the Crevasse Rescue drill.

An overall score of *Not Pass* in any category on the Final Marking Sheet constitutes failure of the exam.

As a general rule, students who receive more than one *Not Pass* in any given assessment category do not pass the category. Students receiving *Marginal* marks for more than one-third of the total number of marks in any given assessment category do not pass the category. *Students who fail any one of the assessment*

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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR – JOSH HARROD

membership update

It's spring! Things are turning green, the hummingbirds have returned from their winter vacation down in Mexico and things in the AMGA Office are moving right along. I've some updates on a few things that concern most every member.

Database, Phones and a blog, Oh My!

If you've visited your my.amga.com page recently you might have noticed some new features. Two that I would like to highlight are Pro Purchase access and printable certificates. For those members eligible for Pro Purchase benefits (Certified Guide, Individual and Certified SPI), you must now access the pro purchase system directly from your my.amga.com page. If you hold a current certification you can now print out a copy of your certificate(s) from your page. So if you've lost yours or need a copy for an employer, permits, etc., just click "Print Certificate" next to your certification(s).

If you've not visited in a while, you will need to reset your password. You should see a "pop-up window" letting you know to reset your password – you **must** do this to gain access to your account.

We recently installed a new phone system in the office with a fancy automated attendant and perhaps some semblance of hold music. This allows you to select an extension for the person/department you're looking for. You may dial the person's extension at any time, **followed by the pound (#) key**. Below is a list of extensions.

Betsy Winter, Executive Director • ext. 1
Josh Harrod, Membership Director • ext. 2
Henry Beyer, Program Director • ext. 3
Ed Crothers, Accreditation & Climbing Instructor Program Director • ext. 4
Leigh Goldberg, Access Director • ext. 5
General Mailbox • press the star (*) key

In other news, we recently launched the official AMGA blog. It can be found at <http://www.blog.amga.com>. Our goal is to use the blog as a place to keep you up-to-date on what's going on in the AMGA world. If you have a story, some pictures or even a video you think might be blog-worthy, please send my way. We will also post current help wanted ads along with guest guiding opportunities, so if you have one to post (200 words or less) send it over.

2011 AMGA Scholarship Recipients

We would like to congratulate the 2011 AMGA Scholarship recipients.

- Arc'teryx – Jed Porter
- Backcountry Access – Patrick Ormond
- Black Diamond - Ben Gardner
- Chad VanderHam – Silas Rossi
- Doug Parker & Roger Baxter Jones Memorial – Jesse Williams
- GORE-TEX® - Joey Thompson
- Jim Ratz Memorial – Peter Doucette
- Jeep – Tracy Martin
- Julie C. Culberson Educational Fund – Sheldon Kerr
- Marmut – Kel Rossiter
- Marmot- Liz Smart
- Mike Hattrup – Don Carpenter
- Mountain Hardwear – Andrew Councill
- Osprey – Don Roth
- Outdoor Research – Tim Brown
- Patagonia – Lindsay Fixmer
- Petzl – Ryan Stefiuk
- The North Face – Mike Soucy
- Walker Family Foundation – Jayson Simons-Jones

We received a record number of applications this year making things quite competitive. Unfortunately, we are unable to fund each and every applicant. We would like to thank all of the applicants for their time, hard work and dedication to the AMGA and guiding community. Please do not let this year's outcome discourage you from applying for AMGA scholarships in 2012.

Nominations for the AMGA Board of Directors

We will be accepting nominations for the AMGA Board of Directors June 8th through July 8th. There will be 5 seats open in 2011. If you are interested in running, we urge you to begin working on soliciting nominations as well as crafting your position statements. If you would like to nominate someone, please email your nomination to Josh Harrod – josh@amga.com. You will find the criteria for nominations below.

NOMINEE CRITERIA:

- Must be a current Certified or Individual Member of the AMGA
- Must receive six (6) nominations
- Must be able to submit a position statement by July 25th, 2011
- Must be willing to serve one (1), three-year term

AMGA Annual Meeting – The 'Gunks, October 2011

The 2011 Annual Meeting will be held in The 'Gunks. The dates have been set and we're beginning on working out all the details. To help us plan accordingly, we will be requiring those attending to register. To register, please visit <http://www.blog.amga.com> and look for the Annual Meeting tab. To help you plan your travel, the tentative schedule will look something like this:

Sunday, Oct 23 • SPI Provider Refresher
Monday, Oct 24 • SPI Provider Training
Tuesday, Oct 25 • SPI Provider Training
Thursday, Oct 27 • AMGA/CGC Round Table Discussion
Monday, Oct 24 • WFR Refresh
Tuesday, Oct 25 • WFR Refresh
Wednesday, Oct 26 • Professional Development Clinics

OPENING NIGHT EVENT • Presented by Marmot

Thursday, Oct 27 • Professional Development Clinics

Friday, Oct 28 • Guides Olympics

THE MAIN EVENT • Presented by GORE-TEX®
Saturday, Oct 29 • Technical Committee Meeting
Sunday, Oct 30 • Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, Oct 31 • Instructor Pool Training
Tuesday, Nov 1 • Instructor Pool Training

We are looking for folks interested in leading the Professional Development Clinics. If you're interested, please contact me (josh@amga.com) as soon as possible to work out the details.

It's guaranteed to be a good time. We hope to see you there!

New Corporate Partners

The AMGA Corporate Partner program continues to grow. In the past few months we've added the following new partners. We would like to welcome adidas Eyewear as our newest Diamond Partner; and KIWI Camp Dry as a Supporting Partner.

As a non-profit organization, the AMGA relies largely on the generous support of its contributing members and corporations to fund its operations. Thank you to all of our Partners for allowing us the ability to

continue our mission to be the premier source for training, credentials and services for professional mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States.

Nominations for 2010 AMGA Awards

We will be accepting nominations for the 2010 AMGA Awards from June 8th through August 1st. If you would like to nominate someone for the Guide of the Year or Lifetime Achievement in Guiding awards, please email your nomination to Josh Harrod – josh@amga.com. You will find the criteria for nominations below.

NOMINEE CRITERIA:

Guide of the Year

The Guide who receives the Guide of the Year Award embodies the following distinguishing traits:

- An individual, who has made an outstanding contribution or achievement of significant value to the mountain guiding profession in the year
- Has exhibited qualities of loyalty, integrity, and moral courage worthy of emulation
- A member of the American Mountain Guides Association
- Known as a person of ability and character

Lifetime Achievement in Guiding

The Guide who receives the Lifetime Achievement in Mountain Guiding Award embodies the following distinguishing traits:

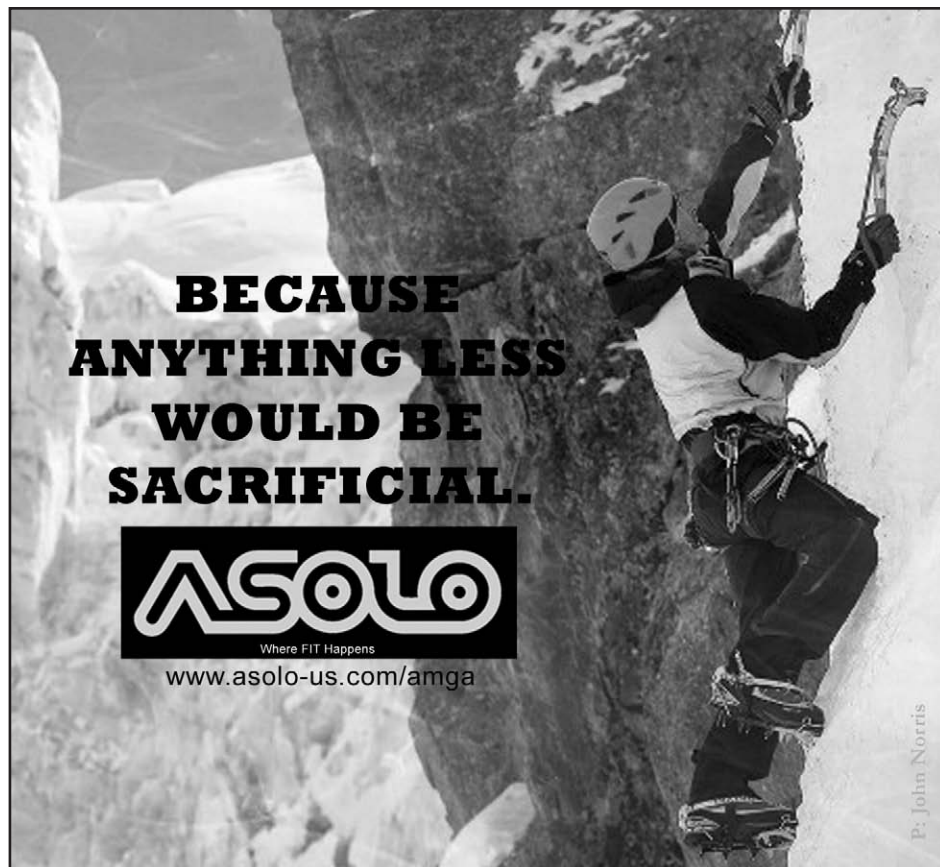
- A citizen of the United States, who, for at least 30 years, has been actively identified with mountain guiding and has made contributions of significant value to the mountain guiding profession
- Exhibits qualities of loyalty, integrity, and moral courage worthy of emulation
- Known as a person of ability and character

Awards will be presented at The Main Event during the AMGA Annual Meeting in October.


New AMGA Merchandise

We now have OR Radar Pocket Caps, embroidered with an AMGA logo, for sale. Currently available in Olive, Khaki, and Diablo, in sizes Small – X-large - \$30 (includes shipping). If you'd like to purchase one (or more), give me a call with credit card/shipping information.

We are also working on getting some new Hoodies as well as some other Technical Outerwear. We will send out emails as things arrive. That's all for now. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call or email me.



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by Ed Crothers,
AMGA Climbing
Instructor Program
and Accreditation
Program Director

RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORMS:

WORTHLESS

OR PRICELESS?

DISCLAIMER: *None of the information provided in this article should be taken as legal advice. This is a complex area of contract law. This article is not an exhaustive analysis of release forms. It should be considered a primer that can be used to review an existing form or as a reference when creating a form. It is the responsibility of the reader to seek the help of a qualified attorney and work in conjunction with their insurance provider to craft this very important document.*

There is a common misperception among people in our line of work that a signed release of liability is not worth much when it comes to defending against charges of negligence. There is a grain of truth to this belief. A release of liability should be thought of as only one part of the “firewall” any insured party should have in place to protect against lawsuits alleging negligence. The “firewall” also includes such things as a good risk and emergency management plan, well-written operations manual, accurate marketing materials, a well-trained and qualified staff, adequate client screening. Protecting against potential lawsuits arising from injury or death needs to be looked at systematically; all parts working together maintain the integrity of the system. If one or more parts of the system fail, the entire system is in danger of failing. A well-written release may not provide much protection if the other components of the system fall short of industry standards. However, when combined with a professionally run program, a release can provide a considerable amount of protection.

It is important to keep in mind that there is not a one size fits all or generic release form. Laws regarding the release of liability vary from state to state. An entity may not allow for the release of liability and require something like an acknowledgement of risk be used instead. The activities a program offers may influence the content of the release. All these things need to be taken into consideration when drafting a release form. *Here are a few general things to be aware of:*

Consideration: The release is a contract. Both parties receive something of value. Participants are signing away certain rights, including the right to sue. In exchange, the provider is granting the right to participate. In the legal world, this exchange is referred to as “consideration.” To make it clear from the start that the parties are entering into a contractual agreement, well written release forms typically begin with something like “In consideration of...”

Identify Inherent Risks: While the inherent risks of climbing and skiing are apparent to any reasonable person, specific risks and hazards should be presented

in the release. When being specific, it is a good idea to include qualifying language. It should be made clear that the list describes some, but not all, of the risks. Secondly, it should mention that there are also “unknown or unanticipated” risks.

Negligence: The release should clearly state that the participant understands and is agreeing to release the program from claims of negligence. It is considered important that the word “negligence” appears in the release. Without that being clearly stated, the release can become worthless. Equally important is not to seek release from gross negligence. Asking to be released of responsibility for “wanton and reckless behavior” is something courts will likely not uphold and could result in the entire release being nullified. Also, when seeking release from negligence, it is important to include language along the lines of “...to the fullest extent permitted by law.” If there is language in the release that is contrary to state law, including the above wording can result in the court removing the offending language, but keeping the rest of release agreement intact.

Indemnification: No matter how good a release is or how professionally a program is run, the potential to be sued cannot be eliminated. Defending against a suit gets very expensive, very quickly. Having an indemnification clause in the release, in some states, allows the defendant to recoup costs from the plaintiff if the ruling goes against the plaintiff.

Avoid Clutter: A good practice is to have the release form be a stand-alone document. It should not include client screening information, rental equipment agreement, photo releases, etc. Avoid creating a situation where a court rules in favor of a plaintiff’s claim they were distracted by all the other information on the form and did not understand they were signing away their rights.

Clear language: The release should be worded so that a reasonable person can understand the contents. The release should clearly indicate that the participant is giving up certain legal rights, including the right to sue in the event of injury or death. Technical legal and climbing terms should be avoided or defined. Keep it simple. Type size should be no smaller than 10 point and basic fonts used. The document needs to be easy to read.

The information in this article assumes the participant is an adult. The issue of minors and release forms is another story and will be looked at in a future article. Also, how and when a release is presented to clients can affect the effectiveness of the release. Again, a topic for a future article.



2011 AMGA SNOWCAT SKI DAY

Raising \$7000 for the AMGA, the 2011 Snowcat Ski Day was a huge success! Thanks to the generous support of Kyle and Cindy Lefkoff, we were able to take 8 clients out for quite the powder day. Jenna and Ben, owners of Vail Powder Guides, did a stellar job tracking down the secret stashes and hidden gems for us all to enjoy. Special thanks to Angela Hawse, AMGA/IFMGA Mountain Guide extraordinaire, Majka Burhardt, master of the rock and pen, Betsy Winter, herder of the cats and to Joshua Harrod, plate spinner at large for taking part in this action-packed day of powder turns and tête-à-tête.

Taking part in the AMGA Snowcat Ski Day allows individuals from all walks to spend the day learning about the AMGA while skiing alongside AMGA guides in the beautiful Vail Pass backcountry. The goal of this event is to build relationships and awareness, while also raising enough money to support important AMGA initiatives.

Thanks to: Kyle and Cindy Lefkoff, Jim and Donna Bold, King Grant, Dana Ivers, Kyle O'Neil, Scott Soden, Deborah Wheeler, and John Winsor for taking part in this distinctive event and for supporting the only association that represents the interests of professional guides and climbing instructors in the United States.

If you are interested in taking part in the 2012 Snowcat Ski Day, or in hosting your own AMGA fundraising event, please contact the AMGA office to learn how!

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ACCESS DIRECTOR

UPDATE

by Leigh Goldberg



We're four months into the new year and the one topic that keeps coming up in the Access world is a law, which President Lyndon Johnson set into motion almost half a century ago. Do you recognize these words?

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

If you guessed the "Wilderness Act of 1964," then you passed!

Land managers at the national and local levels are working hard to uphold the original intentions of the Wilderness Act of 1964 amidst increasing demands for use of designated wilderness on public lands throughout America. It's a tough balancing act especially when we have seen that giving Americans increased opportunities to experience the natural world helps foster a true appreciation for it which in turn leads to a culture of conservation and stewardship.

While the Wilderness Act continues to give us important guidance, landscapes are changing, and even more change lies ahead. What exactly does "untrammelled by man" mean today? What does it mean to preserve an area in perpetuity? How do land managers uphold wilderness values in such a dynamic environment? There's no doubt: it's a challenging time to be in charge of public lands.

To help address these unique challenges, land managers will be convening next year at a conference hosted by Stanford University called *Commercial Outfitting and the Wilderness Act: Legal, Scientific, and Policy Challenges and Opportunities*. The AMGA was invited to participate with government, non-government organizations, and business leaders on this important dialogue about commercial outfitting and the Wilderness Act. It is a huge honor to be asked to participate amongst other experts in the commercial use arena. We'll be sure to keep you posted on the outcomes of this highly anticipated conference.

As authorized partners to public land managers, our professional community plays a major role in protecting our wilderness heritage for generations to come. In my work in the Access Department, I am seeing land managers raising the bar in what they expect from wilderness guides and outfitters. I recently learned about the U.S. Forest Service 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. In 2004, on the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, the Forest Service Chief challenged the agency to bring each wilderness area up to a minimum management standard based upon key performance metrics. As part of this initiative, some local Forest Service divisions are formalizing wilderness expectations and asking guides and outfitters to include these written requirements in their operating plans. Here is an example from Deschutes and Willamette National Forests in Oregon describing performance expectations of guides operating in wilderness areas:

- 1 Has an understanding of the Wilderness Act, and the law, policies and local special provisions of the wilderness in which they operate.
- 2 Places the wilderness resource above the ease and convenience of himself/herself and his/her clients.
- 3 Does not sacrifice the wilderness resource for economic gain.
- 4 Has the ability to interpret natural processes, and communicate to their clients.
- 5 Shares with clients wilderness history, cultural background, ethics and values.
- 6 Continually applies, improves upon and communicates Leave No Trace techniques and best practices.
- 7 Emphasizes the value of opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation in the wilderness.
- 8 In his/her advertising, represents the experience as primitive and unconfined recreation, and prepares clients in advance for a "wilderness" experience in contrast with their daily lives.
- 9 Ability to practice and teach traditional/primitive skills like camping, travel and survival techniques.

Even if you do not operate in these specific forests, the performance expectations listed above are a good example of what is expected of you if you have permits to guide in designated wilderness areas around the country. While these expectations are especially essential when guiding in designated wilderness, they may also apply when operating outside of wilderness areas in many cases. Whether you are operating in wilderness areas managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management, you are expected to understand the Wilderness Act and your role in helping to uphold it practically each and every day you guide in the field.

By 2014, the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, I optimistically imagine those responsible for managing Forest Service lands will be patting themselves on the back for achieving the objectives outlined in the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. It's a huge honor and privilege that our professional community gets to play a part in this mission. *Thank you for continuing to lead the way!*



An Update from AMGA Technical Director – Rob Hess

Our training and certification program is dynamic and ever evolving. Many elements have been in place for some time, but there are other areas that have seen significant change. Here are some bullet point reminders on issues that are worth revisiting.

SKI DISCIPLINE: Guides utilize a variety of tools while guiding in the backcountry. The use and viability of such tools has never been disputed. However, all member countries of the IFMGA / UIAGM require that all students meet a minimum ski standard to receive certification. There are cases where individuals have met the ski standard in countries like Canada on their split boards, but candidates are showing proficiency with ski techniques, not snowboarding techniques.

The use of snowboards in the AMGA training and certification program is being studied. We are watching other countries such as Canada, since the ACMG is rumored to be voting on whether to include snowboards in their training and certification program.

As of now, all individuals embarking on training and certification with the AMGA must meet the ski standards as defined and detailed by the AMGA ski standards outline. To receive a “complete” or a “pass” for AMGA courses and exams with regards to skiing, the following expectations must be met:

- 1 The first day of the Ski Guide Course (SGC) includes a formal ski standard discussion, performance evaluation and videotaping. All individuals must show proficiency on alpine skis with alpine skiing skills. Those who prefer other forms of guiding on snow (e.g., snowboard/splitboard or Telemark) are expected to show proficiency on alpine skis on this day.
- 2 At instructor discretion, students may be asked to further demonstrate, on additional days of the SGC, that they can ski and ski guide at the standard.
- 3 Once the skiing requirements are fulfilled to the instructor’s satisfaction on the SGC, students may vary the tools they use (e.g., splitboard, telemark).
- 4 To receive a pass on the Ski Mountaineering Guide Course/ Aspirant Exam (SMGC/AE) and on the Ski Mountaineering Guide Exam (SMGE), all students must show skiing and ski guiding skill proficiency, on alpine touring equipment, at the standard for a minimum of one day during said program/s.

On the technical skills elements of the aspirant exams there are a few things to remember:

- 1 On crevasse rescue for both the Ski and Alpine, individuals will be allowed to use belay devices as part of the allowed gear in the scenarios. Devices may only be used in standard belay/rappel mode. They may not be used in the auto-blocking mode.
- 2 On the emergency sled rescue test, the guide/rescuer is responsible for all elements of the test. The assistant may only help during the initial lower. The guide/rescuer is responsible for setting the assistant up to lower with a backup. The assistant

then lowers the guide/rescuer and client a certain distance that is determined by the examiner. The guide/rescuer must then build an anchor and transfer the client to the anchor. The guide/rescuer then continues with the scenario.

- 3 On the transceiver test, the guide/rescuer is responsible for all probing. The assistant may only dig for buried packs.

Alpine discipline: As most of you know, the Ice Instructors Course (IIC) is now an integral component of the alpine program. The Rock Instructor Course (RIC) is a prerequisite for taking the IIC. The following information summarizes the guidelines for taking the IIC. Keep in mind that, beginning in 2014, all students must complete the IIC before taking the Alpine Guide Exam (AGE).

- 1 Students who took an Advanced Alpine Guide Course (AAGC) course in 2009, or earlier, do not need to take the IIC, as long as they pass the AGE before the end of 2013. Starting in 2014 all students must complete the IIC before taking the AGE.
- 2 Students who took the AAGC in 2010 may take the IIC before or after the AGE. However, it is highly recommend that they take their IIC prior to the AGE. These same students may choose to test out of the IIC by taking a two-day ice assessment.
- 3 Students who have not taken the AAGC, as of this publication, must take the IIC. They may take it before or after the AAGC. However, the IIC must be taken before the AGE. In 2013 all students must complete the IIC before taking the AAGC.

ROCK DISCIPLINE: A friendly reminder regarding the movement standard prerequisites for the Rock Instructor Course (RIC): Provide a personal climbing resume showing each of the following:

- 1 That you have led or shared lead on at least 50 different multi-pitch traditional routes – 10 of which should be Grade III or longer
- 2 That you have led at least 10 traditional routes rated 5.10a or harder on various rock types.
- 3 You can safely and comfortably lead / mock guide crack and face climbs rated 5.9 at the time of the course.

As you prepare for your next program, be sure to consult the appropriate prerequisites. You are responsible for meeting all requirements and prerequisites. There are items in each discipline that must be completed between the first and second level programs and between the second level programs and final exams. Resumes submitted before the first level programs will not be accepted when applying for second level courses/aspirant exams and so on. Documentation of such requirements will need to be submitted to the Program Director.

Thanks,
Rob Hess
AMGA Technical Director

Marmot FOR LIFE



Athlete: Mike Leake
 Location: Jackson Hole, Wyoming
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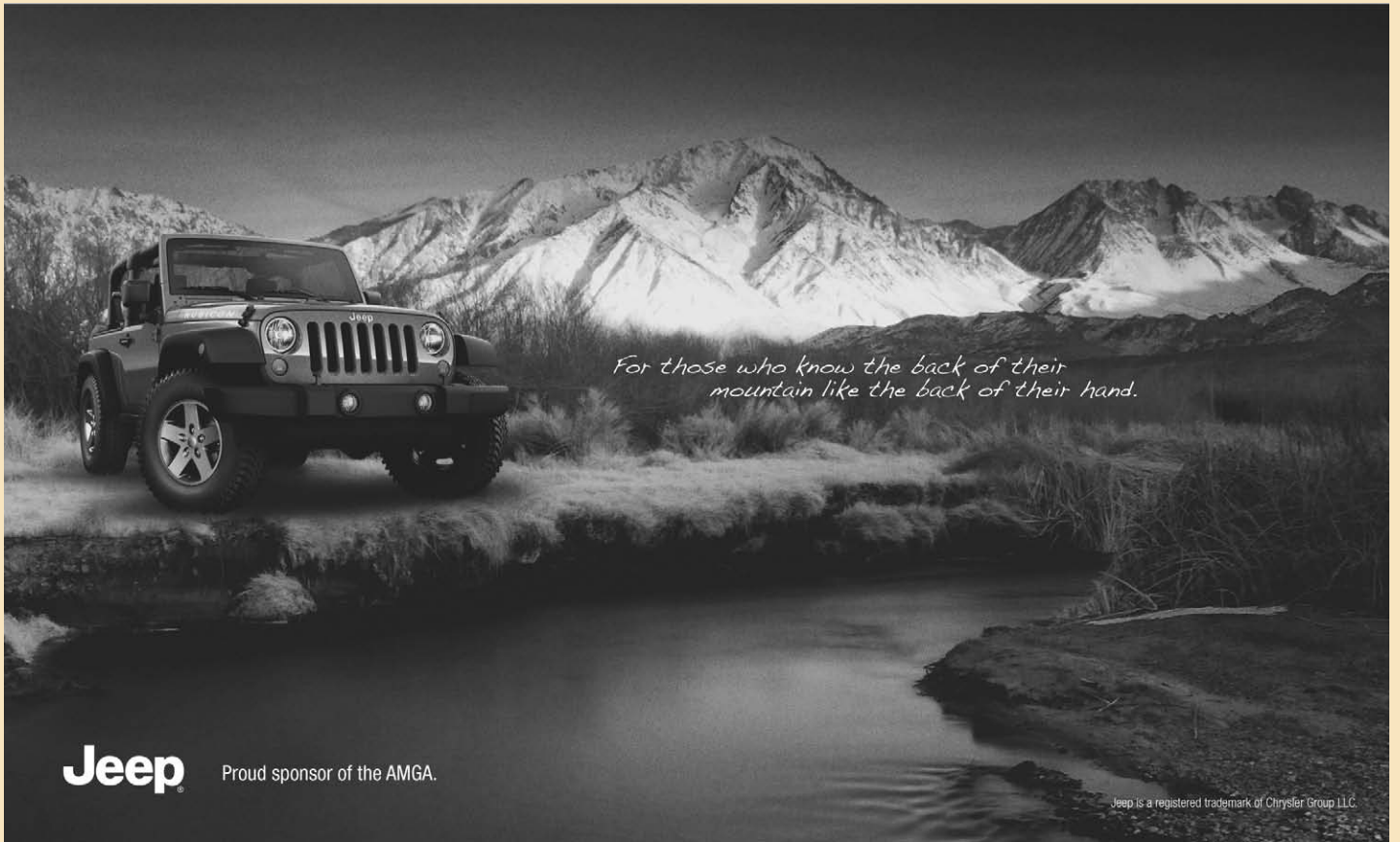


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MOUNTAINEERING

liability insurance trends and thoughts on permit sharing

BY DON PACHNER

TRENDS

We have seen increasing availability and significantly lower rates over the past 5 years for insurance covering guided mountaineering, and this will continue through 2010. Current observers in the insurance world talk of continued low rates and availability of liability coverage. We will know more after reinsurance contracts are finalized at the end of the year. Like guides contemplating a challenging climb for their clients, the outdoor recreation insurance specialists will analyze the insurance landscape, evaluate the options and adapt when we get there.

SHARED PERMITS

In a show of good faith, many guide services look for ways to share permits with their friends, to build relationships with other guide services or to work under difficult-to-obtain permits.

Insurance underwriters do not feel comfortable at all where permits are shared. They know it is a common practice that clients often do not report to the insurance company, even after reported incidents occur. These arrangements should be discussed with your insurance agent.

Before you enter permit sharing arrangements, you should think through the insurance and legal ramifications of the arrangement. I will try to point out some of the pitfalls of permit sharing that you should consider. As long as no litigation and resulting court decisions arise out of shared permits, the arrangement you have will not really be tested.

Many guide services with shared permits properly have the visiting guide service name the permittee and the permitting agency as additional insureds on the visiting guide service's insurance, in accordance with the permit requirements. The two guide services will often have a hold harmless/indemnification agreement in favor of the permittee in a written agreement between the two guide services.

The most obvious potential problem with shared permits involves workers' compensation insurance. The visiting guide service will have his guide work as an employee of the permitted guide service, to ensure compliance with the requirement that all guides working under the permit be employees of the permitted guide service.

If the permittee is paying the guides salary, and the guide is seriously injured or dies on the climb, the workers' compensation insurers for the permittee and for the visiting guide service may fight over which one would have to pay workers' compensation benefits.

To my knowledge, this is determined by state law and cannot be governed solely by a contract between the two guide services. This could become more complicated if the accident occurs in a state such as Washington or Wyoming where workers' compensation is controlled by the state, and the visiting guide service is based in another state.

The guide service that ends up with the workers' compensation claim on their policy will play a significantly higher insurance premium for a three year period starting roughly a year after the accident due to experience rating rules.

The liability insurance issues are less clear-cut. Once a claim ends up in discovery, the permit sharing arrangement will come out in depositions by the attorneys.

The problem is that the visiting guide service presents itself as a booking agent and is not really acting as a booking agent in terms of the guiding...the trip is under the direction and control of the "booking agent", not the permittee.

At the same time, the guide is being paid as if they are an employee of the permittee, for the purposes of tax law and the permit requirements.

When an attorney for a plaintiff discovers that an employee under the direction and control of the visiting guide service is a nominal salaried employee of the permittee, the attorney may allege a permit violation to gain a legal advantage. The arrangement would prejudice the case of both guide services.

Additionally, any settlement or judgment paid out is at the discretion of the insurance company. They look at the cost of future litigation against the cost of the settlement to determine whether to pay the claim. The permitted guide service would have no say in this, and would be defended by the visiting guide service's insurance company, which has no immediate interest in how it impacts the permit.

Any settlement or judgment paid out to claimants could be taken into consideration when the permittee applies for renewal of their permit, even if it the settlement or judgment paid by the visiting guide service's insurance carrier, not the permittee's insurance carrier.

A History of Guiding in the US

BY MARGARET WHEELER

At our meeting last fall in Boulder, we honored the past presidents who served the AMGA over the years. In the process of doing so, Betsy did some digging in the AMGA archives, and from her work I was reconnected with the history of the AMGA. We are a young association, but we have a unique and interesting history...and it goes something like this:

To understand the history of guiding in the United States, one must first acknowledge something of the national landscape in which US guiding was born. The wild lands of the US are separated by vast distances, and include immense diversity: the desert landscapes of the southwest, the jagged glaciers of the Cascade Range, the high peaks of the Continental Divide, and the forested cliffs of the East Coast.

The first official recognition of the value in these wilderness resources occurred in 1916, when the National Park Service was created by the US Congress. Even then – when there were still huge tracks of unpopulated landscape – Congress understood the value of these wild lands, and made the stated goal of the NPS is to preserve and protect the country's most valuable wilderness lands for future generations.

Early records of guiding in America are dated in the 1870s, just a few years after the end of the American Civil War, and at a time when travel from one side of the country to another took eight days via newly completed Transcontinental Railroad. These early guides were hired to help in the massive project of surveying the land so that topographical maps could be created and territory delineated.

The culture of American climbers and guides evolved directly from this landscape and history. From the beginning, this culture has been characterized by reverence for the wilderness and by the self-reliance required to exist in the rugged landscape of early America.

Against this backdrop, the profession of guiding developed in parallel in several regions around the country. In Colorado, guiding operations began in 1877, almost 40 years before the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park. Glenn Exum and Paul Petzold created a School of Mountaineering in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1925, and guides were active in California, Washington, and on the East coast in the early 20th century.

Guides of the 19th century were hired to assist in surveying and mapping the wilderness, but by the early 20th century guiding had evolved towards technical climbing. The guides of the

early 1900s were at the core of the American climbing community, and they were involved in the first ascents and discovery of climbing and mountaineering in the hallowed grounds of American climbing. They created the first climbing schools in the US, and established outdoor education as part of the foundation of guiding in America.

The history of the guiding profession as we know it today began in 1979, when a group of American guides began discussing the idea of forming an association for mountain guides. On August 12, 1980, the American Professional Mountain Guides Association (APMGA) was formed in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Climber and guide Yvon Chouinard was one of three authors of the original charter, which listed 15 guides as members. The first priority of the APMGA was to gain recognition and acceptance into the IFMGA, and the founding members began working to understand this process, meeting with guides from the British Mountain Guides and creating lists of US guides who might meet the multidisciplinary technical standard of the IFMGA.

The road to the IFMGA was not so easy. Since American guiding developed in the landscape of the American wilderness – widely diverse, spread over large distances – it was characterized by regionalized development of techniques, skills, and styles. The evolving permit system was also regionally delineated. These geographical and cultural factors combined meant that there was relatively little technical exchange between guides in different parts of the country during the formative years of guiding in the US.

By the time the APMGA formed in 1980, the profession of guiding in the US had evolved into a complex community with conflicting interests and priorities. The permit system in the National Park System had evolved and had become the norm in many high profile Parks like Denali, Yosemite, and the Grand Teton. Guide services had been built around this system, and time and money had been invested into building those businesses. Given the market of the American public – with the independent 'do-it-yourself' culture, and without the well-developed model and history of guiding in the Alps – making a living as a guide was tough business, and the stakes were high.

In the twelve years between 1980 and 1992, when the US became an applicant country in the IFMGA, the APMGA changed form and evolved both technically and politically. In 1987 the APMGA became the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA), and in 1990 the AMGA conducted its first guides exam. By the time the AMGA was accepted as a full member of the IFMGA in 1997, guide training programs had been developed in three disciplines (ski mountaineering, rock, and alpine) as a way to meet the unique needs of guiding in the US while at the same time achieving the IFMGA standard.

Since 1997, the AMGA has continued working to develop the guiding profession in the US. At the present time there are 76 American IFMGA guides, over 350 Certified Guides, and 32 AMGA Accredited guide



services and climbing schools across the country.

The profession of mountain guiding is still young in many ways in the US: there are no laws that require guiding certification to practice the profession, and as yet only a small portion of the American public realizes the potential and value of the mountain guiding profession. The permit system – originally established to protect and preserve the wilderness – limits the growth of the profession and has inhibited the AMGA's ability to provide reciprocal access for any other IFMGA guides.

Today the AMGA is rooted firmly in the high standard and value of our training and certification programs, and from this solid base we are reaching out to the whole guiding community. This community includes our Certified Guides and all the working guides who are not yet connected to our training programs; it includes Accredited guide services and climbing schools; and it includes the land management entities working to protect and preserve US public lands. The AMGA is a young organization, but we have begun to come of age. Our guides are talented and motivated, and our organization is growing every year. We are determined to be a resource for the public and to the guiding community, both at home and on the international stage.

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President's Corner cont'd from page 1

use. But it can train and certify guides and define the national standard in doing so. And it can create and implement a strategic vision for access. The CGC is a not-for-profit cooperative. It can hold permits and insurance, but it does not have the resources to train and certify guides, or to lobby for and promote the profession. And why should it? The AMGA is doing that work.

Finally, to offer an update from the IFMGA meeting in Sulden, Italy: after Boulder, the IFMGA understands what the AMGA is dealing with, and supports the work of BOTH the AMGA and the CGC. And the IFMGA is not going to kick us out. But the IFMGA does want to know what – and how – the US is working on reciprocal access. Luckily, we have two organizations that – when they work together – have the resources to solve that puzzle.

United we stand...
All the best, Margaret

Executive Director Corner cont'd from page 3

the same page, from the National Office Staff to the Instructor Pool, and from our Members to our Board of Directors. The AMGA Vision helps guide the future direction of the organization and it helps us all spread the word in a simple way. *The AMGA provides exceptional training and certification to create a foundation for world-class mountain experiences. The AMGA supports mountain guiding and provides the services necessary to sustain our profession in the United States.*

I believe the AMGA is a brand worthy of recognition and since we do not have an exorbitant marketing budget it is up to all of us to do our part in relaying a consistent, meaningful message and brand association to those we engage with. Include a link on your website explaining what AMGA and IFMGA certification means. Use your credential specific logo on business cards, ads and other marketing materials. Take the time to share the AMGA Mission and Vision with a client, friend or local land manager. The general public, media, land managers and potential clients wouldn't know who the AMGA is or what it entails to be credentialed unless we all take a moment to provide that information for them.

Say it loud and say it proud!

Program Director Corner cont'd from page 5

categories, do not pass the exam.

In addition, students who receive more than the maximum allowable number of *Marginal* and/or *Not Pass* marks for the entire exam do not pass the exam.

Occasionally a Re-examination may be awarded in situations where a student's overall performance meets the exam standard, but whose technical skills need some minor improvement. An example of this might be failing the Crevasse Rescue drill. *Re-examinations are not given for weaknesses in fundamental skill areas, such as short-roping, movement skills, mountain sense or route-finding.*

Students who receive a Final Mark of *Re-exam* must be re-assessed at a later date by an AMGA instructor.

Students who receive a Final Mark of *Not Pass* must retake the entire exam.

This is a brief description of AMGA course and exam results. If you have any questions about this article or program related issues, please give me a call. I am here to help.

Have a dynamite day!
Henry Beyer
AMGA Program Director

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