

# Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

cover photo: Pete Keane

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## PRESIDENT CORNER

"I've written of the Strategic Plan before, but here is the final version-- concise enough to actually be used as a guiding document by the Office and Board of the AMGA."

## TECHNICAL DIRECTOR CORNER

"Many things have been changed and are slated to change at the AMGA in this upcoming year. I want to take the time to remind people of some important changes and hopefully answer some common questions that have been circulating."

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

"The AMGA is currently working on access for individual certified guides in a number of locations based on the passing of the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) law in Washington D.C."

Vol. XXIV No. 7 Summer 2006

## An Update on Access Issues

By Michael Alkaitis

It has lately come to my attention the AMGA is not communicating enough with our membership in regards to our efforts on access. I hope this piece will be informative enough to answer some questions, as well as start a dialogue with members who wish to keep the conversation open. Access in America is one of the toughest issues facing the AMGA and working toward reciprocal access is part of the AMGA's agreement with the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA). As you all know, commercial guiding access to public lands in the United States is difficult to achieve, but the AMGA continues to devote time and energy to this important issue. The AMGA advocates for climbing and backcountry skiing access based on resources on all public lands first, for the general public and then commercial use.

The AMGA is currently working on access for individual certified guides in a number of locations based on the passing of the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) law in Washington D.C. We worked with a national group of interested parties to create the regulations for the CUA's in 2004 and are just beginning to see the benefit of this work. The AMGA pushed hard for commercial access for individual guides, based on certification and sustainable resource use. The AMGA defines sustainable resource use in terms of how the resource is impacted during the activity.

Mount Rainier National Park recently completed a climbing management plan and has included the option of limited commercial use through CUA's. AMGA/IFMGA certification is required to obtain a CUA in the park and we have been working with the park to develop an application process friendly to foreign IFMGA guides. The insurance requirement with the National Park Service listed as an additionally insured is the largest hurdle in this process. This hurdle is being worked on currently by Giles Claret-Tournier of the IFMGA and Dick Jackson, past President of the AMGA. If this model for access is finalized it can be used to advocate for access in other National Parks (Denali, Yosemite, Rocky Mountain National Park etc...). I will not say the access in Mount Rainer National Park is perfect, as the CUA's are not based on sustainable resource use, but rather on a pre-decided number awarded per year. We will continue to advocate for a change regarding this, but this will take time.

There is still a moratorium on commercial permits on National Forest Service (NFS) land and we are dedicated to working with individual forests to see if there are possibilities based on the National Park CUA process. If you are aware of a National Forest with open commercial permits please contact the AMGA national office at 303-271-0984 or mike@amga.com.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is in charge of Red Rock National Conservation Area and we are working with them to see if there are options based on the CUA model. They are interested in reviewing commercial climbing access, but must have their final Land Management Plan approved before they will start work on a Climbing Management Plan. Currently there are 10 available 10 day permits given out on a lottery basis. These permits are open to everyone including IFMGA guides. Again the hurdle for the IFMGA guides is the insurance with the proof of additionally insured (BLM this time). So currently there are very limited opportunities on BLM land, but we will be sure to promote access for certified individual guides when the Land Management Plan is approved and a Climbing Management Plan is open for comment.

The AMGA Board of Directors has long understood the problems with access in the United States and looked into many models to create an avenue for certified guides (both AMGA and IFMGA international guides) to work legally. With the help of Boots Ferguson and Holland and Hart LLP, the Board decided to create a separate non-profit named the Certified Guides Federation (CGF). The goal of the

(continued on page 3)



## AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-2006

### Executive Committee:

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Rob Hess		Boulder, CO	kyle@boulderventures.com

### Newsletter Deadline

The **Mountain Bulletin** is published in May, August, November and February. The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published November 3, 2006.

Deadline for all submissions, including advertising is January 21 (winter issue) April 2 (Spring Issue) June 30 (Summer Issue) October 16 (Fall Issue)

### Newsletter Contributors:

Mike Alkaitis is Executive Director of the AMGA and a Certified Rock Guide.

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.

John Bicknell is a Certified Rock Guide and current president of the AMGA

Betsy Novak is the AMGA Program Director. Betsy has worked in experiential environmental education for 9 years. Prior to working with the AMGA Betsy served as a traveling educator for Leave No Trace and a climbing director at a youth camp.

Nancy Lea is the AMGA Membership Director. Prior to working with the AMGA Nancy served as Program Director for City Cliffs.

Dick Jackson is a fully certified IFMGA guide and former President of the AMGA.

### National Office Staff

Executive Director: Mike Alkaitis  
Program Director: Betsy Novak  
Membership Director: Nancy Lea  
Technical Director: Rob Hess

### American Mountain Guides Association

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### Read this Disclaimer!

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## An Update on Access Issues: cont'd from front page



CGF is to be an umbrella organization holding permits and insurance on a national level for certified guides. The CGF would enable certified guides to join for a fee and have access to the CGF permitted areas. The formation of a Limited Liability Company for this same purpose was investigated and not chosen due to tax reasons. The non-profit CGF would be held to the same insurance and employee requirements of other commercial permit holders.

In the past the AMGA Board has approved the AMGA office of applying for a concession permit in Denali National Park. The AMGA was turned down for 2 consecutive years and the Board decided the AMGA should no longer apply for open permits. The reason being, the AMGA should not compete with its membership for open permits. The CGF is able to apply for these concessions and permits. If you would like to see this Board Policy changed and have the AMGA apply for permits, hold insurance, have certified guides as employees with their clients, please contact the AMGA Board of Directors, run for the Board, or write to the Board through the office. There are many internal steps required to make these changes, but it is up to you, the membership, to become involved and influence the Board to make these policy changes.

There are a number of areas with open commercial guiding permits. For a complete list and contact information go to [http://www.amga.com/members/Access\\_Issues.html](http://www.amga.com/members/Access_Issues.html). If you are aware of additions or subtractions to this list, please contact the AMGA at [mike@amga.com](mailto:mike@amga.com).

The public lands that have open permits and require either certification or accreditation to obtain a permit are: Joshua Tree National Park, New River Gorge National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, Devils Tower National Monument, The Mohonk Preserve (Shawangunks NY), Eldorado Canyon State Park, Ouray Ice Park.

The public lands with open commercial guiding permits and no certification requirements are: Denali National Park (without Denali and Foraker), Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Acadia National Park, Alaska State Parks, City of Rocks National Reserve, North Cascades National Park, Red Rocks National Conservation Area (10-10 day permits).

The AMGA is continuing to grow and my hope is to someday soon have 500 certified IFMGA guides trained by the AMGA. The access issue will not go away, but we will continue to work toward certification and accreditation being the standard for obtaining commercial guiding permits. During the June Board meeting a motion was passed to have the AMGA law council and office draft a letter to be sent to all public land managers promoting certification and accreditation be used as the criteria for obtaining a commercial guiding permit.

I encourage all of you to become a leader in the guiding community and the AMGA, to work toward obtaining your dreams, and to someday see mountain guiding in the United States become a true profession. A profession where you become certified, earn a decent living, have a family, home, retirement account, and insurance. I know I have not answered all of your questions and concerns, but hope this article opens a dialogue on this important issue.

## President Corner

by John Bicknell



I'm writing this during a 10-hour layover in Miami while en-route to Bolivia, where I'll be guiding the next few weeks. That long of a lay over was discouraging when I first saw my ticket, but in retrospect, it's great. Given that I've somehow managed to stumble into a life with a wife and 3 kids, 2 businesses, an active guiding schedule, and now the AMGA Presidency-- lay-over time is quiet and golden. It's possible I've been able to think more and get more done the last 6 hours than in the last 6 months. For those of you in similar circumstances, I recommend it.

In April, I attended the Technical Committee and General Meeting of the IFMGA in Austria with ex-President Dick Jackson. Dick has been going to these meetings for years and knows everyone. It was a tremendous help having him introduce me both to individuals and to how it all works. Thank you, Dick.

What struck me at the IFMGA meeting is how similar their concerns are to ours. They worry the land managers may soon step in and regulate guided climbing in ways no guides want, particularly after a bad season for avalanches, many involving guides and clients. They worry about the practical experience of aspirants as opposed to their training level.

In terms of the U.S., as Dick has stated for years, the IFMGA representatives do seem to understand the AMGA's relative inability to influence the US government policies regarding international access. They see the formation of the Certified Guide Federation as a positive step, but would like to see follow up action by the CGF.

The last Board meeting was June 10th in Boulder. A great deal got done but for me two things were paramount. The AMGA's Strategic Plan was approved and the Board passed a proposal to revise the Top Rope Site Management Program with the goal of making it more accessible while maintaining program quality.

I've written of the Strategic Plan before, but here is the final version-- concise enough to actually be used as a guiding document by the Office and Board of the AMGA.

*(continued on page 4)*



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*(continued from page 3) - President Corner*

*Here is the approved Strategic Plan.*

The following four-point strategic plan was adopted by the Board of Directors at it's June 9, 2006 meeting. The plan represents the priorities for the organization and will guide committees and staff in their work to create a budget for 2007. The goals and tactics indicated by this plan will be detailed more specifically by committees and staff. We view this plan as a working document and will revisit it annually in the spring so that it can inform the planning and budgeting process for the following year.

The AMGA will:

- 1) Unify the guiding community in the US and within the AMGA.
  - a. Seek to have every working US guide a member of the organization and in support of education, certification, and standards.
- 2) Continue to strengthen the education and testing programs.
  - a. Improve our ability to deliver the volume of guides necessary to meet the needs of land managers and customers demanding certified guides
- 3) Improve the benefits of membership
  - a. Improve access for certified guides and accredited schools
  - b. Make the AMGA an information source for members
  - c. Negotiate group discounts for members (e.g. insurance)
  - d. Market certified guides and accredited schools
- 4) Continue to develop the long-term financial strength and stability of the organization.

To me the core goal remains the same. The AMGA needs to be the voice for guides and professional climbing instructors in the U.S. their professional association. At the moment, the AMGA is not that sole voice. How can it be when the majority of working guides and climbing instructors are not members? If the AMGA can become that sole voice, then I believe we will have the credibility and power to truly offer "member benefits"-- increased access opportunities, greater ability to make a living because trained guides will not be competing with large numbers of untrained guides, increased public respect for guiding as a profession-- to name a few.

From the comments I've received over the last 8 months, many of you share this vision. You agree that we need to reach out to the guiding community. The revision of the TRSM program can help us to do that. At present, we are looking at the UIAA model that over 30 countries presently follow. We are looking at a format similar to the one in use in Great Britain (which has over 9000 certified Top Rope Site Managers, though in Great Britain they are said to have achieved the Single Pitch Award). That format is a weekend course followed by a training period followed by a weekend-long examination. The program is focused on individuals just entering their career as professional climbing instructors, where I believe the U.S. program in recent years often became too complex.

This new format and curricula is not finished. I hope it can be finished, approved, and introduced in trainings that will coincide with the Fall Annual Meeting. So far, in discussion form at least, it has been generating considerable interest on the part of many of the large organizations that focus primarily on top rope climbing. To reach our vision we need to be working in cooperation with those organizations as opposed to being in conflict with them. I believe the TRSM revision can help us do that-- it can become a tremendous tool for outreach.

I hope you are all having good summers-- great climbing, enjoyable clients, cool, dry weather. Be careful with the thunderstorms and perhaps I'll see you in the Mountains or at least in Bishop at the Annual Meeting.

Yours, John Bicknell  
AMGA President.

## Guide's Gear



Mammut is the official rope provider on all AMGA programs and a Diamond Corporate Partner.

### Mammut Serenity 8.9 mm Rope:

Single ropes just keep getting smaller and smaller in diameter and the new Mammut Serenity rope (8.9 mm diameter, 52gm/m weight) is the smallest I have tested to date. While more than a few of my partners had initial shock at first sight, they soon became converts. The rope handles well and somehow feels strong enough in your hands to instill confidence even when run out on an Eldo test piece. The rope has held up well on granite and limestone sport climbing, Eldorado and Boulder Canyon traditional climbs and a few Alpine Granite climbs. I would not recommend this rope for the desert, Vedauwoo, or much top rope use, but when weight is an issue, this is the rope for you.

This rope retails for \$220-\$250. For more information or to order go to: [www.mammut.com](http://www.mammut.com), (802) 985-5056, or [info@mammutusa.com](mailto:info@mammutusa.com)



Black Diamond is the official sponsor of the AMGA Rock Guide Exams and a Diamond Corporate Partner.

### Black Diamond Tracer Helmet:

The new lightweight (245 g for Md) helmet from Black Diamond is full of pleasant surprises. The obvious advantage of weight, but also the new closer system and sizing allow you to fit the helmet snugly and without any discomfort. The ear adjustments could be modified for better closure, but overall this has become my favorite helmet.

While it has been on numerous rock climbs, I also used it as my spring backcountry skiing helmet. Black Diamond does not recommend it for this use, but I thought it was better than no helmet at all. This well ventilated helmet is a great helmet for anyone.

This helmet retails for \$89.95.  
For more information visit [www.bdel.com](http://www.bdel.com)



### Petzl Meteor III Review:

Petzl has done it again with the newly designed, ultra light weight and super ventilated climbing helmet; Meteor III. It weighs in 25g lighter than the previous Meteor at 235g (8.3 oz) as one of the lightest helmets on the market. Sixteen vents cut into the closed-cell foam keeping air flowing, making it a great choice for hot summer days. New to this Meteor III are the headlamp clips and mounting inserts for the VIZION face shield that the previous Meteor was so desperately missing. The new ratchet strap adjustment is more like what the Elios helmet employs rather than the previous Meteor head adjustments. It fits nearly any head size and easily adjusts for a stocking hat. The only downfall is the high profile "cone head" look and limited coverage in the back of the head (obviously head size dependant). Otherwise, this ultra lightweight helmet is so comfortable and cool you'll probably leave the crag wearing it.

This Helmet retails for \$88.95. For more information please visit:  
<http://en.petzl.com/petzl/SportAccueil>

*(guides gear continued on page 7)*

# Mammut ropes up with the AMGA



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**R13 - Advanced Rock Guide Course:**  
9/3-23/06 - Black Canyon

**R15 - Advanced Rock Guide Course:**  
9/18-27/06 - Eldorado Canyon/RMNP

**R17 - Rock Guide Exam:**  
10/2-10/8/06 - Eldorado Canyon/Black Canyon



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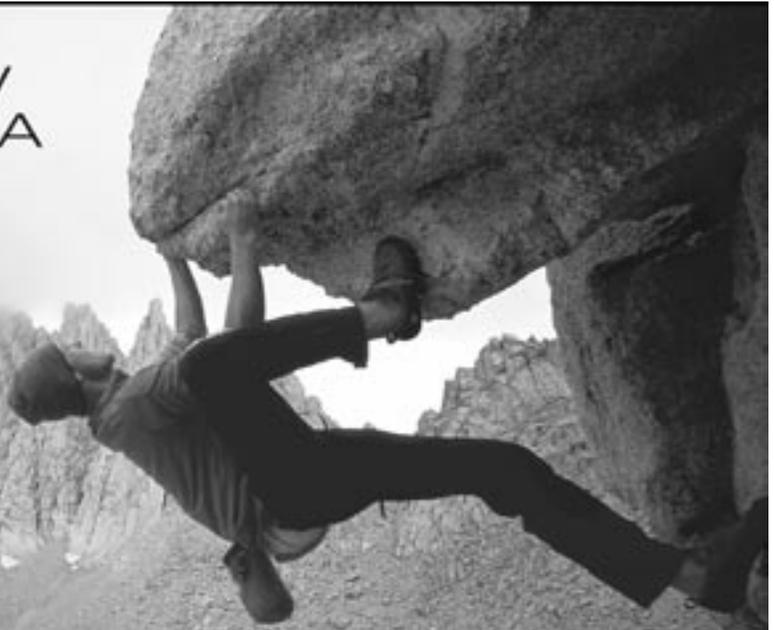
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Todd Smith makes the most of a rest day after being rained off the Keeler Needle in the Sierra Nevada, CA. Photo: Greg Epperson



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**patagonia**

committed to the core

(continued from page 5) - Guides Gear



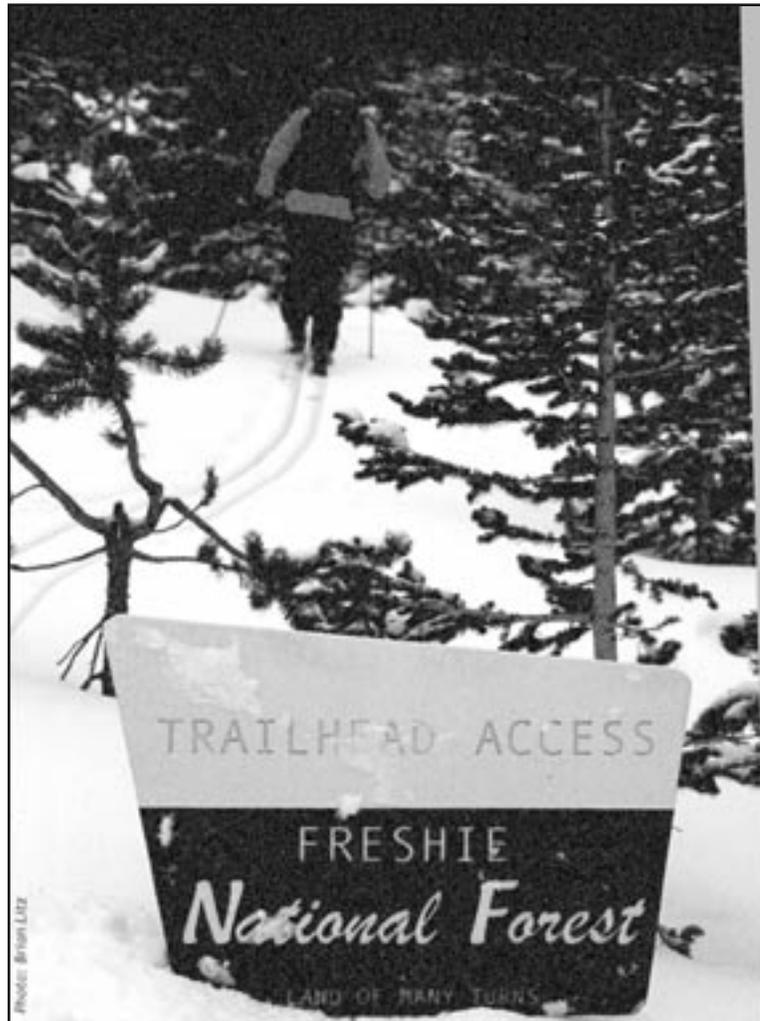
### Sierra Designs Volt sleeping bag:

I must say that I haven't used a synthetic sleeping bag in years. Even as a northwest climber I have taken great care to keep my down bag dry in exchange for its lightweight and compressibility. When the Sierra Designs Volt showed up for testing I was skeptical. While a bit heavier than a down bag, it was reasonable (2lbs, 8oz) for a 15 deg bag. I was actually quite impressed by its compressibility. I took the stuff sac from my smallest down bag and was able to get this bag (barely) to fit into it. The bag has some unique features that worked well. In an effort to keep the bag light, there is only a zipper halfway down the side. Getting in and out was no problem, though the overall cut of the bag was fairly narrow and larger people might find the fit tight. In order to accommodate the venting issue with a half zip, they have added a tiny zipper at the foot of the bag to vent the foot box. This seemed a bit like wishful thinking to me as the opening is tiny and doesn't really stay open on its own. One feature I did enjoy was several small and removable straps on the bottom of the bag designed to hold your sleeping mat in place. This worked well for those slopey campsites. Finally the hood of the bag is designed like a jacket hood to save weight and fit tighter. This worked well, but like the rest of the bag, left me feeling a bit restricted. If you are looking for a lightweight synthetic bag and don't mind a trim fit, this bag just may be the one for you.



### Sierra Designs Antares Tent:

The Sierra designs Antares tent is a 3 person, 3 season tent that weighs in at just under 8 lbs on my scale? The tent sets up quickly and is very user friendly with quick clips on the outside of the tent body and fastex buckles to secure the fly. The tent will fit 3 climbers snugly with 2 climbers being very comfortable for an extended tent stay. I appreciated having 2 doors with 2 different sized vestibules on the tent. The small one worked well for storing packs and boots, while the larger one was easily roomy enough to cook in. Each vestibule has 2 doors so you can enter or exit away from any wind. One issue I had came while venting the vestibule for cooking. The opening allowed moisture to drip inside the tent due to the lack of poles on the vestibule. Overall, the tent has some great attention to small details. It comes with a gear and drying loft (with removable hot drink holders!), pretaped seams, and different colored zipper pulls for inside and outside. The doors of the tent body can be



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unzipped almost entirely and close with the zippers at the top, making them easy to find in the middle of the night. The tent is generously vented with lots of mesh on the tent body. This is most likely what earns it the 3 season categorization as the tent is otherwise quite sturdy. This would be a great client tent for longer summer trips that operate out of a base camp situation. It's a touch on the heavy side if only 2 people are carrying it, but would be much appreciated during any down time spent in this roomy and well thought out tent.



# Technical Director Update

by Rob Hess, Technical Director



Many things have been changed and are slated to change at the AMGA in this upcoming year.

I want to take the time to remind people of some important changes

and hopefully answer some common questions that have been circulating.

The first and most significant change is the **elimination of course challenges as of December 31st, 2006**. This change was first detailed in my newsletter article dating November of 2004. December 31st, 2006 will be the last date that one can apply for challenges of advanced courses - in other words, skip the first level course in any discipline given the proper prerequisites and personal resume.

There are a number of important reasons for this change, which mainly deal with the preparedness and success rates of individuals embarking on the certification process. In many cases, individuals coming to advanced courses on a challenge basis have been well behind the other participants in knowledge of curriculum and technical skills. This has forced instructors to alter the course to meet the needs of such individuals - in many cases re-teaching information that was expected to be prerequisite information on the course. This redundancy has been found to hamper the course agenda of getting on real mountain routes and coaching participants in practical application.

The seriousness of the advanced level courses and agenda warrant a need to view participants before they are allowed to progress to the advanced level. This is a safety issue for both instructors and participants. Entry-level courses are an important step in evaluating ones skill level and identifying steps needed to progress.

One might ask, "Why then was anyone allowed to challenge courses?" The simple answer is that the AMGA has been anxious to include as many American guides as possible in the organization. Initially, many senior American guides were grandfathered into the organization and given certification in certain disciplines. As many know, exam challenges were allowed up until

2004 and phased out. This process was extended as a courtesy to working American guides, but phased out for many of the same reasons as course challenges.

As an IFMGA country, we are the only country that allowed such challenges. The reasons were clearly explained by the AMGA to the IFMGA and accepted, but were also viewed as an evolutionary process towards where we are going now. We must weigh the concerns of the American guide along with the needs of the IFMGA. To this end, we allow for discipline specific education and are the only membership country that does.

Knowing that this process puts an additional burden on guides and guide services, we have built a program whereby entry-level courses can be hosted by interested guide services on a contract basis. Active AMGA Instructor pool members must be used, curriculum and amount of days must not change, and approved venues must be utilized. After that, the organizations are left to organize and charge at what ever level they choose. If they can do the course for less expense for their guides, great!

The final step, which is in the process of being worked out, is the restructuring of our training and certification programs. I will detail this in the fall newsletter, but the Technical Committee has built a program that will not drastically affect the basic course structure but that will enhance the education and subsequent certification process.

Thanks for your ear, have a profitable and safe summer guiding!

Rob



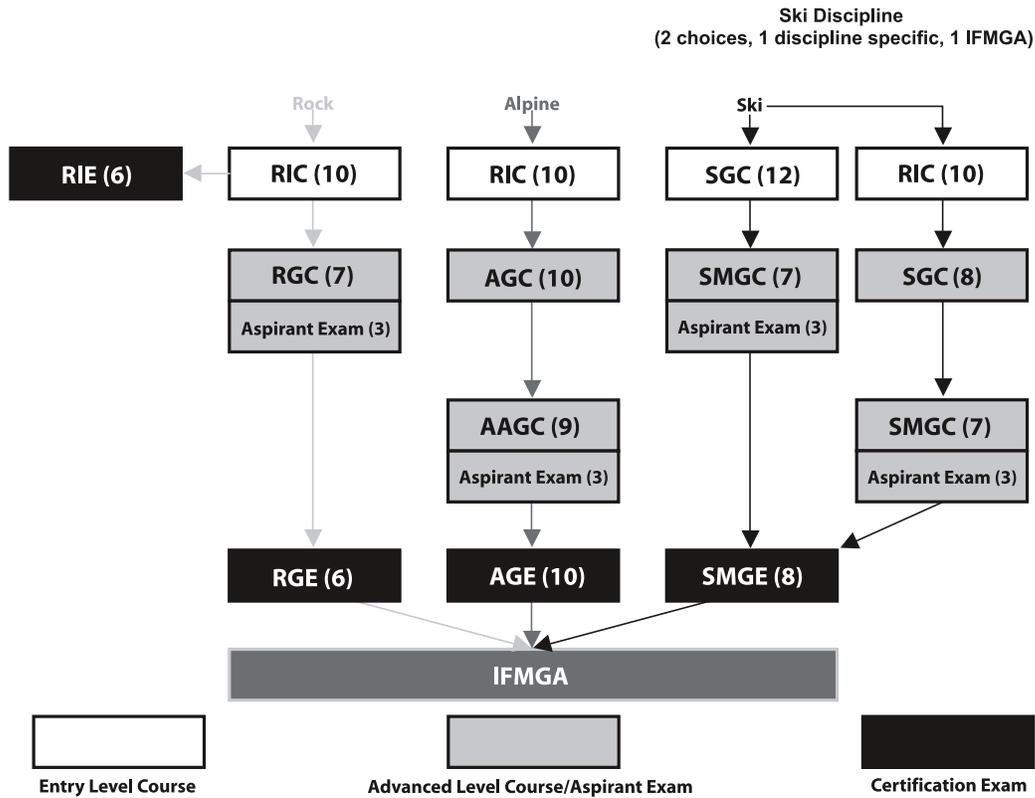
The Skylight Jacket by Marmot. Part of the Miles Smart Signature Series of gear inspired, designed and tested by Miles, an Alum mountain guide and the recipient of the 2004 American Mountain Guide Association's Guide of the Year award. Miles is a minimalist, focusing on fast, light and nimble gear with an emphasis on simplicity and performance. Engineered with waterproof and highly breathable GORE-TEX® K<sup>2</sup> fabric and featuring stretch anatomic articulation, the Skylight Jacket is designed to meet the demands of professionals who work outdoors for a living. It's all part of the deal when you're a Marmot for Life.

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# AMGA Flow Chart





## Membership Corner

by Nancy Lea, AMGA Membership Director



Dear AMGA Member,

It's Tuesday August 1st. I just wrapped up my first day of training the new Membership Director, Henry Beyer and the new Program Assistant, Justin Yates. I am really excited about these two guys joining the AMGA Team! I have no doubt that they will both be ready to hit the ground running and that they will be serving you with your membership and program needs in no time. Please take a look at the intros from Henry and Justin.

Well, I've never been one for teary goodbyes. Besides, I'm not completely out the door just yet. I will be working behind the scenes on the Annual Meeting coordination and I'm sure I'll pop into the office occasionally.

However, I can't leave without thanking a few special people for making the past five and 1/2 years here at the AMGA a wonderful experience. First, I would like to say a big, huge THANK YOU to Mike Alkaitis, my boss, climbing guide, patient ski instructor, and friend. It has been an absolute pleasure working for him and along his side! I'd also like to thank Simon Fryer, the former Program Director who helped make the AMGA a fun place to come to work each day. I feel fortunate to have spent several years working with him.

We miss Simon's energy but we definitely are excited to have Betsy Novak as our new Program Director. Betsy has been doing a tremendous job and I feel really lucky to have gotten to know her over the past few months. I've also enjoyed having another female in the office. Her companionship has been very valuable!

Over the years I've worked with several members of the board of directors on various committees and through my daily tasks. I want to thank each of them for their support. They are an amazing group of diverse volunteers and they make the AMGA a special organization.

Lastly, I have to say that I believe in this organization and the people that make it up. The AMGA has made huge strides in the last several years and I really believe that one day this organization will have the national and international attention that it deserves.

I look forward to seeing where the organization goes over the next few years and I hope to see many of you at the Annual Meeting in Bishop this fall!

Best Wishes,  
Nancy Lea



### The AMGA Welcomes Henry and Justin

Well the first thing I should do is introduce myself. My name is Henry Beyer and I am replacing Nancy Lea as the Membership Director. This position is an entirely new undertaking for me since I have spent the last eight years or more working as a carpenter; so I hope you will bear with me as I learn the ropes. I'd like to thank Mike Alkaitis and the AMGA community as whole for this opportunity and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible. Please feel free to contact me with a simple Hello or even a question so that I can begin to get to know you. Until then enjoy some good clean fun in the great outdoors.

Sincerely, Henry Beyer



Greetings Members:

This is clearly an exciting time for the AMGA and I am thrilled to have this chance to help serve our membership. As an avid climber and skier I share a passion with you for the mountainous areas of the world. I look forward to meeting many of you over the phone and if you are in the Boulder area please drop by the office.





## 2006 AMGA Board Election

Please view position statements online at [www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com)

### AMGA Board of Directors Ballot – 2005

Please take a moment to vote for up to three individuals to be seated on the AMGA Board of Directors in October. Only Individual and Certified Individual Members of the AMGA are eligible to vote in the Board of Directors election, as part of their membership benefits. You can view the position statements at [www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com). Cut this ballot out and send it via mail to PO Box 1739, Boulder, CO 80306 or fax your vote in to 303-271-1377. Ballots will be accepted until September 8, 2006. Election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting and posted to the AMGA website.

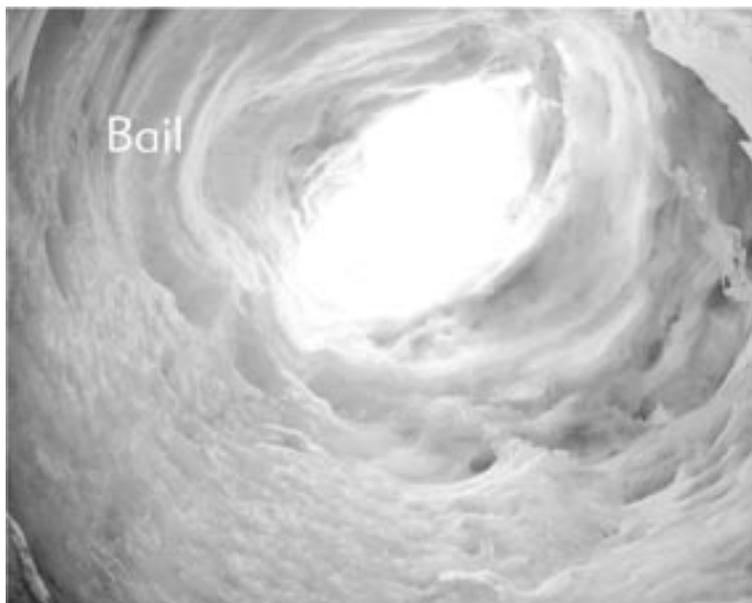
Vote for up to three of the following individuals:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keith Garvey | <input type="checkbox"/> John Kear     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angela Hawse | <input type="checkbox"/> Todd Rutledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rob Hess     | <input type="checkbox"/> Joe Thompson  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pete Keane   | <input type="checkbox"/> Todd Vogel    |

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Note that your name is **required**. This is a ballot control measure. Your vote will be held in strict confidence.



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## Report on the IFMGA meeting in Neustift-Stubai Austria May 2-6, 2006

By: Dick Jackson, IFMGA Guide, Past president of AMGA

Being my last official representation at the IFMGA Technical Commission and Delegation, I was pleased to have John Bicknell along to “pass the baton” and meet our peers in the international guiding community. The new President of the IFMGA is Claude Rey from France. The agenda for the Technical Commission focused on multiple avalanche victim search techniques, with presentations by Chris Semmel on the “3 Circle Method” and Manuel Genswein on his “Micro Search Strips Method”. Both techniques were presented indoors and then followed by a field session that proved quite impressive and professional. Certainly this information will be conveyed to our Alpine and Ski Discipline Coordinators, and both John and I have formal documentation that should prove beneficial to our membership in general. The balance of the TC’s discussion addressed guide training and the Aspirant status within the IFMGA. The new Technical Director, Alexis Mallon, addressed the Aspirant Issues along with the concept of a permanent TC with Sub-Committees that meet 4 times/year. He stressed the need to standardize the requirements for candidate guides through a “structured list” with a ranking of difficulty for the tours and climbs that each country requires in the guide training entry level. A follow up report from each country will address the curriculum and content for both Avalanche Training and High Alpine Tours in summer conditions. These reports will be accumulated and analyzed at the next meeting in Greece November 24-25, 2006. Perhaps the

strongest statement that Alexis made was the goal to have the assessment/evaluation of the Aspirant become an equivalent level. Yet the question of “supervision” of the Aspirant guide is still unclear and will certainly be the continued focus at the next TC meeting in the fall.

There are now 22 countries in the IFMGA, with the two newest members being Argentina and Bolivia. The question of Education Standard consistency is more of an issue than ever before. The IFMGA is looking more closely at its Code of Ethics and would like each country to send copies of their documented Code of Ethics. An example of this ethical concern relates to a European guide with 45 clients on Ama Dablam last fall. The former president of the IFMGA, Peter Geyer, has taken on the chair of the Sub Committee on Alpine Accidents. He would like a list of authorities from each country to contact if and when an accident occurs. And finally, a new edition of the IFMGA booklet is being printed, with the contact being Pierre Pisano from France.

Once again, I thank both the AMGA office staff and the membership for this final opportunity to attend an IFMGA function. The AMGA continues to function with the respect and patience of the IFMGA Delegation as we pursue land access and benefits for the certified mountain guide.

### Annual Meeting Details:

#### Bishop, CA - October 21st and 22nd

Title Sponsor - Patagonia

WFR Recert TBA

Leave No Trace Trainers Course October 17th and 18th

#### Friday October 20th:

Board of Directors Meeting 9am – 5pm (location TBA)  
Welcome Event at Whiskey Creek in downtown Bishop  
(Sponsored by Marmot)

#### Saturday October 21st:

Professional Development Clinics (time/location) TBA  
Main Event 7pm – 10:30 pm (location TBA)  
Awards Ceremony 8:15  
Silent Auction 7:00-8:00  
Slide Show featuring Vince Anderson 9:00

#### Sunday October 22nd:

Professional Development Clinics (time/location) TBA  
Guides Olympics (TBA)

#### Lodging:

Camping is available throughout the national forest and BLM land. For reserved camping spots please call **877-444-6777** or visit [www.bishopvisitor.com/fcr/index.php3](http://www.bishopvisitor.com/fcr/index.php3) for a full listing of campgrounds and RV parks.

#### Closest Major Airport:

Reno/Tahoe 165 mi.  
Closest airport: Fresno, 83.9 mi

More details to come!



# Program Update

by Betsy Novak, AMGA Program Director



As the new Program Director for the AMGA, I'd like to use this summer Mountain Bulletin as an opportunity to introduce myself to our members, partners, and guides. I come to the AMGA National Office in Boulder from Washington State where I have spent the past 11 years being schooled in and working, for the most part, in the field of Experiential Environmental Education. Most recently, I just spent the past two years living out of a Subaru, a feat I'm sure many of you are familiar with, traveling around the United States, working with sponsors and partners while also educating all walks of outdoor enthusiasts about responsible recreation. While working for Leave No Trace the Center for Outdoor Ethics I had the opportunity to work with a small handful of AMGA member guides by conducting the Leave No Trace Trainer Course at the past two Annual Meetings.

Prior to "life on the road" I was still living out of my van and enjoying the seasonal lifestyle that again, I'm sure most all of you are familiar with. My winters once were spent working at ski areas in the Northwest, doing whatever I needed to gain quick and free access to the mountain, while my summers were spent either working as the Rock Climbing Director at a youth recreation camp or as a Forest Service Ranger for the Mount Baker Ranger District. Directly out of college I worked with public and alternative schools on a small island helping develop environmental education curriculum and leading outdoor adventure trips as well as, at a handful of youth programs where I promoted service-learning and self-designed, interdisciplinary education.

As you can see my passion lies in the outdoors and in the importance of getting individuals out of their element and into the natural world. It is because of my passion coupled with my past work experiences that brought me to the AMGA and finding a job that resonates with what I value was essential to making the move. I am more than excited to be a new edition to the AMGA and look forward to meeting and working with all of you throughout the upcoming years. My goal is to help strengthen AMGA programs by: bettering communication with members and guides, streamlining and staying on top of the enrollment process, building upon our relationship with land managers, growing our instructor pool, and by helping increase our member base.

I believe guiding is an important facet to the well-being of our society and hope to one day see it become a valued, recognizable profession where you all can continue to do what you love and be able to make a more than reasonable, insured living doing it, now wouldn't that be something!

With all that said it is probably a good idea for me to give you a taste of what you are looking for, a program update. The 2007 schedule is finally completed, now that is news worth celebrating. So, for all of you who are anxious to get your applications in early, the time is now to start perusing the course and exam list and start planning your next year. Starting January 1, 2007 the NEW APPLICATION DEADLINE will be EIGHT weeks prior to the start date of the course or exam you are applying for. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. However, if you miss the "application deadline" do not fret, simply call the AMGA office to inquire about space availability. In order for me to maintain the highest level of program communication and development it is essential that when applications are submitted all required forms, resumes, payments, and certifications are included. This will help save us all a little time and in the end make the enrollment process more efficient and timely.

I hope your summer seasons have been keeping you busy and out of any epic encounters. I look forward to working with you all as the summer courses wrap up, the fall courses begin, and the winter season patiently awaits.

Safe Travels,  
Betsy

## EXAM RESULTS for AMGA 2006 Winter/Spring Programs

**Congratulations to the following successful graduates of AMGA Certification Programs!**

### SKI DISCIPLINE

#### Certified Ski Mountaineering Exam

Steve Banks  
Dale Remsberg  
Matt Wade  
Tim Connelly  
John Race  
Jon Tierney  
Todd Passey

### ROCK DISCIPLINE

#### Certified Rock Guides Exam

Steve Johnson  
Kent McBride  
Travis Piper  
Josh Helling  
David Miller

#### Certified Rock Instructor Exam

Jessie Williams  
Ryan Stefiuk  
Lynn Hill



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Protech  
Red Ledge  
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Ski Trab  
Sterling Rope Company  
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Trango  
Vasque Footwear  
Yates Gear, Inc.

### MEDIA Partners:

Alpinist Magazine  
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Please contact Mike Alkaitis if you would like to contribute to the AMGA at [mike@amga.com](mailto:mike@amga.com) or 303.271.0984

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