



Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

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Letter From the Executive Director

With a new office staff on board, our ship is ready to set sail full-speed ahead. It is a great honor to be offered the opportunity to steer the helm alongside an amazing and dynamic crew.

President's Corner

Here's my challenge and my request to you-- vote in this year's Board election. Boardmembers have been elected with less than 20 votes...

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Vol. XVIV No. 11 Summer 2007

Letter From the Executive Director

By Betsy Novak



It is an exciting time for the AMGA. With a new office staff on board, our ship is ready to set sail full-speed ahead. It is a great honor to be offered the opportunity to steer the helm alongside an amazing and dynamic crew of talented individuals who are committed to helping the AMGA succeed. All of the front-line and behind the scenes work that keeps the AMGA office successfully afloat is thanks to: Henry Beyer, Program Director, Katie Kelly Membership Director, Justin Yates, Program Assistant, and Stephanie Leazewksi, Accountant. Cheers to the crew and to the opportunities ahead!

Without the hard work and dedication of Mike Alkaitis the AMGA would not be where it is today so I would like to extend a huge thank you to Mike for all he did during his tenure as Executive Director. The AMGA office wishes him the best of luck in his future endeavors!

Since taking over the Program Director position in May of 2006 I have had the opportunity to work directly with many of you. The day-to-day contact I enjoyed with members, candidates, instructors and aspiring guides was one of the many highlights to my previous job. As I assume the responsibilities of Executive Director I wish to maintain a high level of communication with and commitment to the heart of the AMGA-our 1,300 plus members.

My goal is to contribute to the overall success of the AMGA by dedicating my time and energy to: unifying all walks of the guiding community, promoting Certification and Accreditation, improving upon membership benefits, strengthening educational programs, expanding education opportunities for professional guides, increasing AMGA membership and corporate partnerships, growing the AMGA image in the public eye, building strong support networks amongst the climbing/skiing population, working with Land Managers on important issues, and to making sure that the American Mountain Guides Association continues to "Lead the Way" for professional guides in the United States.

The AMGA has made huge strides in the last several years and I believe that our organization will continue to grow until one day the word guide is synonymous with AMGA Certification and Accreditation. This growth can only happen if we work together and create a unified voice for all to hear. Your questions, ideas, concerns, and vote matter, so please feel free to contact the AMGA office at any time. I look forward to hearing from you and to hopefully seeing you at the October Annual Meeting in Yosemite.



Students on an advanced Rock Guide Course



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Newsletter Deadline

The Mountain Bulletin is Published in February, May, August, November. The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published November 16th, 2007.

Deadlines for all submissions, including advertising are: January 12th (winter issue) April 13th (spring issue) July 13th (summer issue) October 12th (fall issue)

Newsletter Contributors:

Katie Kelly is the AMGA Membership Director.

Betsy Novak is the AMGA Executive Director.

Henry Beyer is the AMGA Program Director.

Mike Alkaitis is a Certified Rock Guide and General Manager of Total Climbing in Boulder, CO.

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

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Program Director: Henry Beyer

Membership Director: Katie Kelly

Program Assistant: Justin Yates

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Read this Disclaimer!

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



President's Corner

by John Bicknell



Where the weather is perfect, the conditions in the mountains reported exceptional, and where, between late flights and trips to the airport in search of clients and gear, I've had three hours sleep in sixty--so I apologize in advance if this sounds like a sleep deprived ramble.

Clearly the biggest news coming from the June Board meeting in Boulder is the hiring of Betsy Novak as the new Executive Director of the AMGA. While searching for the proper candidate to replace Mike Alkaitis, the Board of Directors interviewed several excellent people over the past two months. Betsy quickly stood out as the person most capable of managing the organization today while steering it to where it needs to go tomorrow. As Program Director, Betsy exemplified those qualities while overseeing the major changes in the Training and Certification Programs throughout this past year. I'm confident we made the right choice. Meanwhile, over the last few months, Betsy, Henry, and Justin have managed to keep the office afloat while continuing to work short-staffed (thank you all). Excellent news is that by the time you read this, that should no longer be the case. Assembling a full staff was essentially Betsy's first priority and that process has gone well.

Also in June, the Board approved moving ahead with the Pilot version of the Climbing Wall Instructor Program in conjunction with the Climbing Wall Association. Nothing is final yet, it is a Pilot Program still with a lot to be worked out, but this is potentially a huge step towards the AMGA's future. With the public, we are still no where near as visible as I would like us to be. Ask anyone who runs a guide service, we are asked more than we used to be if a given guide is AMGA trained and certified, but that question still comes far less than once a week. I envision the AMGA becoming the prime organization responsible for training climbing guides and instructors in the U.S.-- an individual looking to learn to climb

would climb with an AMGA trained individual when they enter a gym, in a summer camp's top rope program, and then would also know to ask for an AMGA certified guide when they enter the mountains whether with rock shoes, ice tools, or skis. This type of partnership with the CWA could be a forerunner of similar arrangements in the future with organizations like the American Alpine Club. I know I sometimes repeat myself in these articles, but I believe we will either become a nationally recognized organization leading the guiding industry or we will remain marginalized-- and if the public does not know us, there is no real reason for the land management agencies to listen to us on other issues.

I've asked a lot of guides over the last few years if they agree with this vision of the future or if they prefer the alternate vision of complete focus on the quality of the IFMGA programs. In conversation, most seem to see the advantages of the larger organization but I really am not sure what most of you think. One way to make this your organization (I hope it already is) is to become involved. Taking the courses and exams is wonderful and these programs have grown every year this century. But a great thing about the AMGA at present is that it is still small enough to be heard and small enough for a single individual to make a great difference. I am going to make a plea for greater involvement on your parts in the AMGA.

Here's my challenge and my request to you-- vote in this year's Board election. Boardmembers have been elected with less than 20 votes and even the leading candidates rarely receive 150 because just not that many of us vote. If you agree with where we are heading, vote. If you disagree, vote for a candidate who seems to share your disapproval. If you really disagree, run yourself. Another great way to be involved is to let Betsy know what you'd like to see the AMGA do-- send her an email -- betsy@amga.com. Only with your voice can the AMGA really become "Your Guide Association".





AMGA Past ED Thoughts

By Mike Alkaitis

It has been 3 months since my last day at the AMGA and I would like to share some thoughts from this time away. Betsy Novak is the new Executive Director and her great energy and spirits are sure to keep the AMGA moving towards the day when Certification is the standard and Mountain Guiding is considered a true profession. Henry Beyer as the new Program Director will continue making the programs more professional, timely, and cost effective.

The Board of Directors is key to any nonprofits success and the AMGA Board is full of wonderful individuals dedicated to the AMGA and willing to donate countless hours to the task. I encourage all of you to vote in the upcoming election, as the Board represents the interest of its members. The Certified Guides Federation recently received additional funding from the Board and has a business plan to be in effect by 2008. Many individuals have worked on making the CGF a reality and deserve thanks from all of us.

It is because of these dedicated people on the Boards of the AMGA and CGF that I am full of pride and optimism for the future. I can't wait to attend the Annual Meeting as a member and not an employee. Also, I am excited about all the rope guns who will be there to join me in Yosemite. As I sit here in Boulder dreaming of returning to the Diamond on Longs Peak, I wish all of you well and hope to see you out in the hills.



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"The Flight 28 pack is my first choice when guiding multi-pitch rock routes. Fits all my gear inside on the approach and, when compressed, its compact size is easily carried on the climbs." — Art Mooney, AMGA/IFMGA certified guide

"The Serenity 8.9 — best damn lead line on the market! Light, supple, and durable. This exceptional rope is a guide's dream for working with two clients on long multi-pitch routes. Strong enough to be used as a single line, runs easily through a Reverso, BD Guide, or GiGi, saving your arms on those speedy belays, and less weight to carry on the approach. I have zero hesitation taking a whipper on this rope!" — Carolyn Parker, AMGA Rock Guide

"The Stratus jacket is the one piece of clothing I use all the time in the mountains. I use it for insulation on long, cold trail runs and under my Laser Jacket for really frigid climbs, and it packs small enough so I can take it up with me when I climb the Diamond in one long, spring day." — Jack Roberts, AMGA



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As climbers we err on the side of caution when it comes to our ropes, pampering and retiring them when we begin to feel uneasy, yet we belay, fall, rappel, lower and jug on our harnesses believing that these workhorses will last practically forever. But will they? No one really knows.

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Once the testing is completed and the numbers crunched, Rock and Ice will publish an article on just how safe (or unsafe) those used harnesses really are.

As a thank-you, once we receive your used harness, we will send you a \$25 gift certificate to be redeemed at Mountain Gear for an ARC'TERYX on-line purchase. You can click here www.mountaingear.com/harness to find out the submission details.

Thanks in advance for helping us make climbing a safer sport.

Warmest regards,
ARC'TERYX & the AMGA

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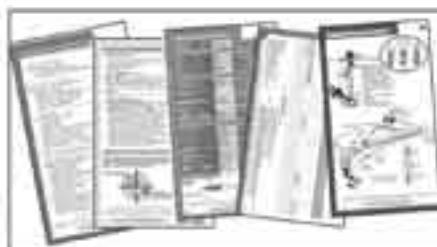


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AMGA 2007 Summer Gear Review

For the summer issue of the mountain bulletin climbing gear is the theme. We reviewed two harnesses, three ropes, a runner and 2 carabiners. What is nice about the products we reviewed is that they are extremely versatile—they are not limited to the summer cragging season. Thus the information provided will hopefully prove useful whether your goal is summer cragging, long alpine routes, or winter ice climbing.

As you are probably aware we try to review equipment that is not only suitable for personal use but more importantly meets the needs of guides. All of these products seem to cross over nicely and would work well however you choose to use them.

Ropes: When we came up with the idea of reviewing 70-meter ropes the question of diameter was foremost in our minds. To settle the question we polled AMGA guides to find out what their preferences are. With few exceptions most of the respondents said that a thinner diameter rope (9 to 9.5 mm) is better because they are easier on the elbows when belaying two ropes simultaneously. The one exception would be a scenario where there might be a lot of top roping like at Indian Creek or the Ouray Ice Park. Then a slightly thicker diameter rope that is more durable is preferred.



Mammut Serenity 8.9 mm Rope: At 8.9 mm and 52 g/m the Mammut Serenity is the thinnest and lightest rope of the three. At first glance,

the reviewers were somewhat taken aback by how small the rope is, however its performance is undeniable. The rope handles well and feels strong enough in your hands to instill confidence. The factory coil is particularly nice, eliminating the nasty kinks so common with new ropes. Suitable for rock or alpine terrain, the Serenity held up well on granite and limestone sport climbing, Eldorado and Boulder Canyon traditional climbs and a few alpine granite climbs. Given that durability is traded for weight this rope is not recommended for top rope use, nor is it particularly suited for the desert or a venue like Vedauwoo. This was the reviewers' favorite rope.

Retail Price: \$220-\$250

For more information or to order go to: www.mammut.com, (802)-985-5056, or info@mammutusa.com

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Beal Joker 9.1 mm Rope available through Black Diamond: This is a good rope. Reviewed in a variety of terrain from Eldorado and Boulder Canyons to Lumpy Ridge to Vedauwoo this rope performed beautifully. At 9.1 mm and 53 g/m this rope handles superbly with a nice stiffness to flexibility ratio. The reviewers did find this rope to be extremely stretchy—if you fell you went a long way whether on lead or top rope. Excel-

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Zoe Hart in training for the AMGA alpine guide exam, Mt. Fay, Alberta, Canada.
Photo: Andrine Quenne © 2007 Patagonia, Inc.





lent for long multi-pitch routes or hard redpoints, the Joker is a great all season rope that balances nicely the trade off between durability and weight.

Retail Price: \$179.95

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Petzl Nomad 9.8 Rope: The Petzl Nomad at 9.8 mm was the largest diameter rope reviewed. Tested in the same terrain as the previous two ropes, the Nomads durability was immediately apparent. The rope was somewhat stiff at first, especially around the markings, but certainly acquired a nice suppleness and manageability over time. This rope certainly falls into the category of workhorse. When weight is not your primary concern, tie into the NOMAD for sport climbs, alpine routes, or anything in-between, as this is a perfect all-around rope.

Retail Price: \$239.95



For more information please visit:
<http://en.petzl.com/petzl/SportAccueil>

Harnesses: We reviewed three harnesses this spring, the Petzl Adjama and Luna, and the Mammut Baffin. All three harnesses worked well in rock and alpine terrain, although the Mammut harness definitely seemed more geared towards alpine climbing.



Mammut Baffin Harness: The Mammut Baffin harness is a good all around harness. It is ergonomically tailored, extremely comfortable and suitable for all uses on rock and ice. At 520 g it is noticeably heavier than the Petzl harness, but it does however have more padding in the waist and a more complex buckle system. With Click buckles on the waist and the legs, this harness offers a high degree of operating comfort, which as Angela Hawse commented, "makes for a very useful alpine and mountaineering harness." At first the Click buckle system is a little unnerving, especially when one is used to the more standard double back buckle set-up. However once one adjusts to it, there is no noticeable difference in security. A feature of note is a plastic fitting in the tie in point of the leg loops that is meant to substantially reduce wear.

Retail Price: \$59.95



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Petzl Adjama & Luna Harnesses: The Petzl Adjama and Luna harnesses are the same harness but for men and women respectively. With adjustable leg loops the harness can be used for a variety of purposes--climbing and mountaineering in addition to cragging and route climbing. I've used the harness mostly for



rock climbing and some longer alpine rock routes. The pre-threaded doubled backed buckles are easy to adjust and make putting on and removing the harness

almost effortless. I did find that once I used an autoblock on the leg loop that the buckles tended to loosen up over time. There is very little padding on this harness making it quite light (Means med. is 435 g), but remarkably it is quite comfortable even after hanging in it for quite some time. The gear loops in the front are angled forward so that gear slides to the front of the loop making it easier to grab. This has become my go to harness no matter what the climbing challenge of the day is.

Retail Price: \$79.95

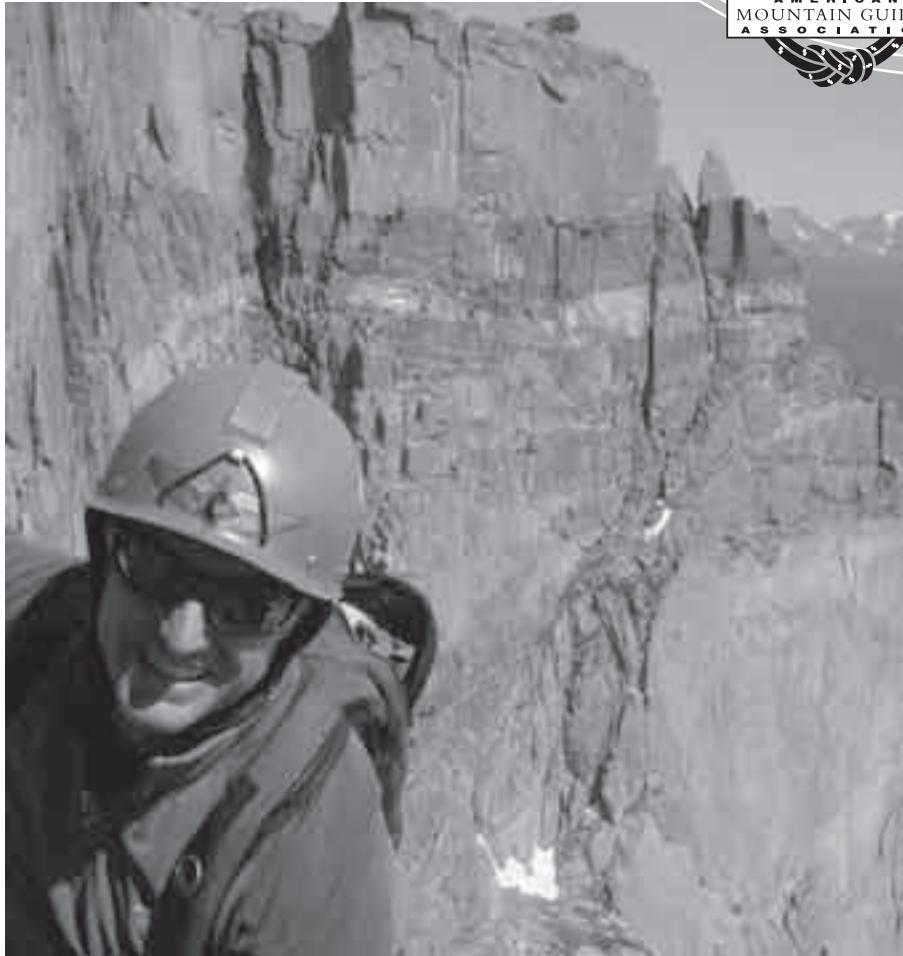
For more information please visit: <http://en.petzl.com/petzl/SportAccueil>

Runners and Carabiners: We tested as a set the Dynex shoulder length runners (24"/60 cm) from black diamond along with a Neutrino and Hotwire carabiner—both from Black Diamond.

Dynex Runners: I found this to be great combination. Although the Neutrino and Hotwire carabiners have been around for a while they worked extremely well with the new shoulder length 10 mm Dynex™ runners. For a grand total of 100 g, this setup offers a high degree of strength and manageability while still remaining super light. I like using the Neutrino carabiner for clipping into protection and the Hotwire for the rope end of the runner. Two Hotwires would work great if gloves were being worn because of their slightly larger profile. After a summer of heavy use the ultra lightweight, high strength Dynex™ runners have proven to be quite durable and abrasion resistant. I would recommend this set-up to anyone.

Retail Price: Dynex™ Runner (60 cm) \$7.95; Hotwire \$7.75; Neutrino \$7.50

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AMGA Board of Directors Ballot – 2007

Please take a moment to vote for up to five 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. 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 24, 2007. 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"/> Nate Disser | <input type="checkbox"/> Todd Rutledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adam Fox | <input type="checkbox"/> Jon Sargent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alan Jolley | <input type="checkbox"/> Evan Stevens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marty Molitoris | <input type="checkbox"/> Joey Thompson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dale Remsberg | |

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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Conrad Anker, Brady Robinson, and their ultra-durable Caber Hybrid Jackets are up to the challenge. K7, Pakistan. Photo: Jimmy Chin.

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AMGA welcomes Katie Kelly & Cheers out to Henry



Greetings...After my first week at the AMGA as Membership Director, I am truly excited to be working for such a wonderful organization supported by a great group of folks. Coming from the world of sustainability and many years exploring the outdoors, I am confident that my driven nature will contribute to the success of the guiding community as well as the mission of the AMGA. Please feel free to contact

me with any thoughts, questions, or suggestions on how you would like to see the AMGA evolve. I look forward to meeting you all at the Annual Meeting in Yosemite.

Katie is replacing Henry Beyer who recently moved on to the Program Director position. Henry is a rock star and will excel as AMGA's new Program Director.

Congratulations Katie & Henry!

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2007 AMGA Annual Meeting

October 21, 22, &23 in Yosemite National Park

The AMGA Annual Meeting is a time-honored tradition that brings together the largest gathering of American mountain guides. It is the perfect opportunity for AMGA Members and guides to participate in professional development clinics, share ideas, discuss current issues and celebrate the guiding community.

This year's Annual Meeting will take place in Yosemite National Park, CA. We are very excited about hosting an Annual Meeting in this venue. Yosemite offers some of the finest climbing in the world as well as other attractions for guides and the general public.

We will officially kick off the weekend festivities with a party hosted by the AMGA, on the evening of October 21st. Based on prior attendance we expect to have a great turnout. Then, on the 22nd and 23rd all AMGA members are invited to participate in a variety of free professional development clinics. These clinics are run by IFMGA and AMGA certified guides and offer important educational experiences for all of our members. During

these two days, our title and supporting sponsors will have the chance to name a specific clinic or hold product demonstrations. On the evening of the 22nd the AMGA Main Event will be held and will include a silent auction, awards ceremony and a special film presentation. The 23rd concludes the activities and provides light-hearted competition and comic relief with the annual "Guide Olympics" on Sunday.

The AMGA Annual Meeting is a unique opportunity for guides to gather and work together towards the common goals of the guiding community. The Annual Meeting is a forum for education, discussion and debate in a relaxed atmosphere. Please contact Katie Kelley at 303-271-0984 or Katie@amga.com for more information.

We hope you will join us to help celebrate 10 years as an IFMGA member. From all the folks at the AMGA ~ We look forward to seeing you in Yosemite!

October 17-18: Leave No Trace Training Course

October 18-19: TRSM/SPI Provider Training

October 19: Board of Directors Climbing Day

October 20: Technical Committee Meeting

October 21: Board of Directors Meeting,
Opening Night Event brought to you by Marmot

October 22: Professional Development Clinics, Main Event

October 23: Professional Development Clinics,
Legendary Guides Olympics

October 24-25: Instructor Pool Training

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Claude Rey



Unfortunately things happen that no one can understand.

On Saturday 28th July, early in the morning, our friend and President of the IFMGA, Claude Rey, broke through a snow field at the

foot of the steps to Concordia hut and fell 30 metres deep between rocks and glacier. Unfortunately Claude died from the injuries of this accident at the hospital of Sion.

Snow, ice and rock were Claude's elements. He loved the mountains, his guests and his profession. Questioning and analyzing were his tactics to find the best solutions and to improve the reputation and the status of the mountain guides.

After having worked for four years as Vice-President of the IFMGA, he was elected as President of the world federation of the mountain guides in November 2005 in Chamonix.

His critical but very fair nature quickly lead to good solutions and to the confidence of the members of the IFMGA.

Claude is no longer among us. He was taken from us in his home, in the mountains.

http://www.ifmga.info/images/global_images/vorstand/claudie_rey.jpg

News of Rod Richardson



Rod Richardson joined the AMGA in 1995 and was a certified ski and alpine guide. He guided for Sierra Mountain Guides of Reno, Nevada and June Lake, CA. Rod was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq on October 4,

2006, the day after his 54th birthday. Rod was buried with full Marine Corps honors in Boise City, Oklahoma. The procession of cars to the service was 2 miles long.

Rod grew up in Oklahoma and graduated from East Central Oklahoma University in 1976. He joined the US Marine Corps out of high school and served 2 tours in Viet Nam. After graduation he re-enlisted in the Marine Corps officer program. During the next 20 years it is not an exaggeration to say that Rod Richardson revolutionized mountain warfare tactics and training for the Marine Corps. He designed and instructed training

programs in ski and alpine mountaineering in Alaska, Peru, Chile, Norway, Greenland, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China among other places. From 1987 to 1990 Rod was the Operations Officer and Chief Instructor at the USMC Mountain Training Center at Bridgeport, California. He upgraded the training from moon boots and snowshoes to fast and light travel with telemark skis and modern mountaineering equipment.

After retiring from the Marine Corps in 1994 Rod guided part time for Sierra Mountain Guides and worked as general manager for Rite of Passage, a high school and treatment center for at-risk youth. He found the time to lead an expedition to K2 in 2002 and nearly reached the summit before being turned back by bad weather. When the Iraq war began Rod felt compelled to return to service. He went to work for a private company which provides security for the US Department of State. He designed and led security details for US diplomats in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Obviously Rod's record of accomplishment was incredible, but the thing that stood out about Rod was his devotion to excellence and the care for his fellow Marines, students, and guiding clients. In the words of one of Rod's Marine friends "Rod was the best on earth".

NOLS director dies in Wyoming Climbing Accident



Lander, WY - August 12, 2007 - It is with a heavy heart that we report the tragic loss of Pete Absolon, the NOLS Rocky Mountain director and former AMGA board member. Pete died Saturday in an accident at

the Leg Lake Cirque in the Southern Wind River Range. He was climbing with a friend for the weekend when he was struck by a rock that had been thrown by a group of hikers above. The hikers were unaware that there were climbers below. They hiked around and met his climbing partner after they realized what happened. It is our understanding that Pete was killed instantly.

"We are deeply saddened by this tragedy," said Bruce Palmer, Acting

Executive Director for NOLS. "Pete was a good friend and a key member of the NOLS community. He had a great sense of humor and a quick and sometimes mischievous grin. Our thoughts and sympathy are with his wife, Molly and their daughter, Avery".

Pete will be dearly missed.



THANKS TO OUR TOP CONTRIBUTORS!

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