

MOUNTAIN BULLETIN

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION



PRESIDENTS CORNER

BY MARGARET WHEELER

THE OTHER DAY I WAS ON FACEBOOK WHILE I WAS WAITING FOR SOME GUIDING PHOTOS TO UPLOAD, WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN MY BLACKBERRY WENT 'DI-DOO!', INDICATING I'D JUST RECEIVED AN EMAIL. ACTUALLY, IT WAS AN EMAIL AND A TEXT, LUMPED TOGETHER. THAT'S WHEN MY PHONE RANG...

Does this sound slightly familiar? I'm not even on Twitter yet, and I am already constantly aware that I'm behind in reading all the emails, articles, correspondence...it becomes a mountain to keep up with. Especially if you spend too much time on Facebook. Or if you are trying to run a business. Or make a living as a mountain guide.

I'd like to make a proposal to each and every one of you reading this article. For the next 6 months, I propose you try to put the AMGA on the top of your reading pile, or at least very near it. Maybe not above the New Yorker, or the Economist...but up there somewhere.

And more importantly, I would ask that you put the AMGA on the top of your response pile. This is the hard part, I know – sitting down to respond to an article or an email takes valuable time, and means more minutes or hours indoors, or away from fun or family. Nor does it bring in more clients, or convince existing ones to return.

So think on it: if you were driving the bus, where would you take it? Pitch that old edition of People Magazine, close that Facebook window for a second, and let's hear from you.

But...here's the thing. The past 6 months of the AMGA have been busy and productive, and we are hoping that the next 6 months will be the same. But as your president, and as a board member – we need to hear from you, our membership. As a board we are examining priorities for the AMGA, and we are working to create our long-range plan. We have

grown so much as an organization in the past ten years, and now we are looking forward to the next ten.

For example, in June we sent out a report detailing the work of the AMGA-CGF subcommittee before the Spring BOD meeting, and we've had some excellent and thoughtful responses. Keep them coming! The subcommittee is continuing its work to investigate the options for both organizations, and the AMGACGF survey is a direct result of this work. This is an ongoing process, and your feedback is vital to keep it all connected.

On another note: I know you're out there, you less-than-vocal types. What issues matter most to you? Where do you live and guide? If you took an AMGA course or exam this year, how was it? What did you love about it, what did you wish could change or improve? Were you able to benefit from an AMGA Scholarship? Have you checked out the new myAMGA database?

This summer you'll receive some good reading from the office: position statements for October's BOD elections and ballots to vote for them; a survey created by the CGF and the AMGA which focuses on access and permit issues and priorities. Updates from Katie and Henry and day-to-day correspondence. And as the fall meeting approaches you'll be receiving information about the Round Table on Access, the meeting, and the events we have planned.

So think on it: if you were driving the bus, where would you take it? Pitch that old edition of People Magazine, close that Facebook window for a second, and let's hear from you.



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Martin Volken / Boston Basin on Forbidden Tour

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Ed Crothers is the AMGA Accreditation Director.
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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.
Scott Schell is a Certified Ski Mountaineering Guide and the Executive Director of the Certified Guides Federation.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The Mountain Bulletin is Published in February, May, August, November. The next newsletter will be published on November 25, 2009.
Deadlines for all submissions in 2009, including advertising are: January 9th(winter issue) April 10th (spring issue) July 10th(summer issue) October 9th(fall issue)

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Program Director: Henry Beyer
Membership Director: Katie Kelly
Accreditation Director : Ed Crothers
Program Assistant: Justin Yates

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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ED UPDATE

BY BETSY NOVAK

I HOPE THIS LETTER FINDS YOU WELL AND ENJOYING THE SUMMER SEASON WHEREVER YOU MIGHT BE. AS I'M SURE MANY OF YOU KNOW THERE HAS BEEN A LOT GOING ON HERE AT THE AMGA AND I FIGURE NOW WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO COMMUNICATE TO THE MEMBERSHIP ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON.

Before I continue, I want to remind you that the 2010 elections are upon us and it is up to our voting membership to help determine the future of our organization. Please take the time to learn about each qualified candidate and be sure to VOTE! Also, keep a watch out for a survey coming to your email inbox soon. It is so important for every member to take part in this critical survey brought to you by the CGF and the AMGA. Your answers will help us determine how much of a priority immediate access is to our membership and how much those who feel it is a top priority are willing to commit to help make it happen.

AMGA Seeking Solutions to the Age-Old Issue of Access for Professional Guides:

The AMGA continues to work tirelessly on the issue of access for professional guides. A meeting was held with representatives from both the Certified Guides Federation and the AMGA in May. The goal of the meeting was twofold: 1. Define the relationship between the CGF and the AMGA and 2. Create a strategic plan to support both the long and short-term aspects of gaining access for certified guides. All committee members agreed that "Guides need guide services and guide services need guides, and the AMGA needs guides and guide services; as an organization we must work to promote and represent both credentialed guides and guide services!" However, it became ap-

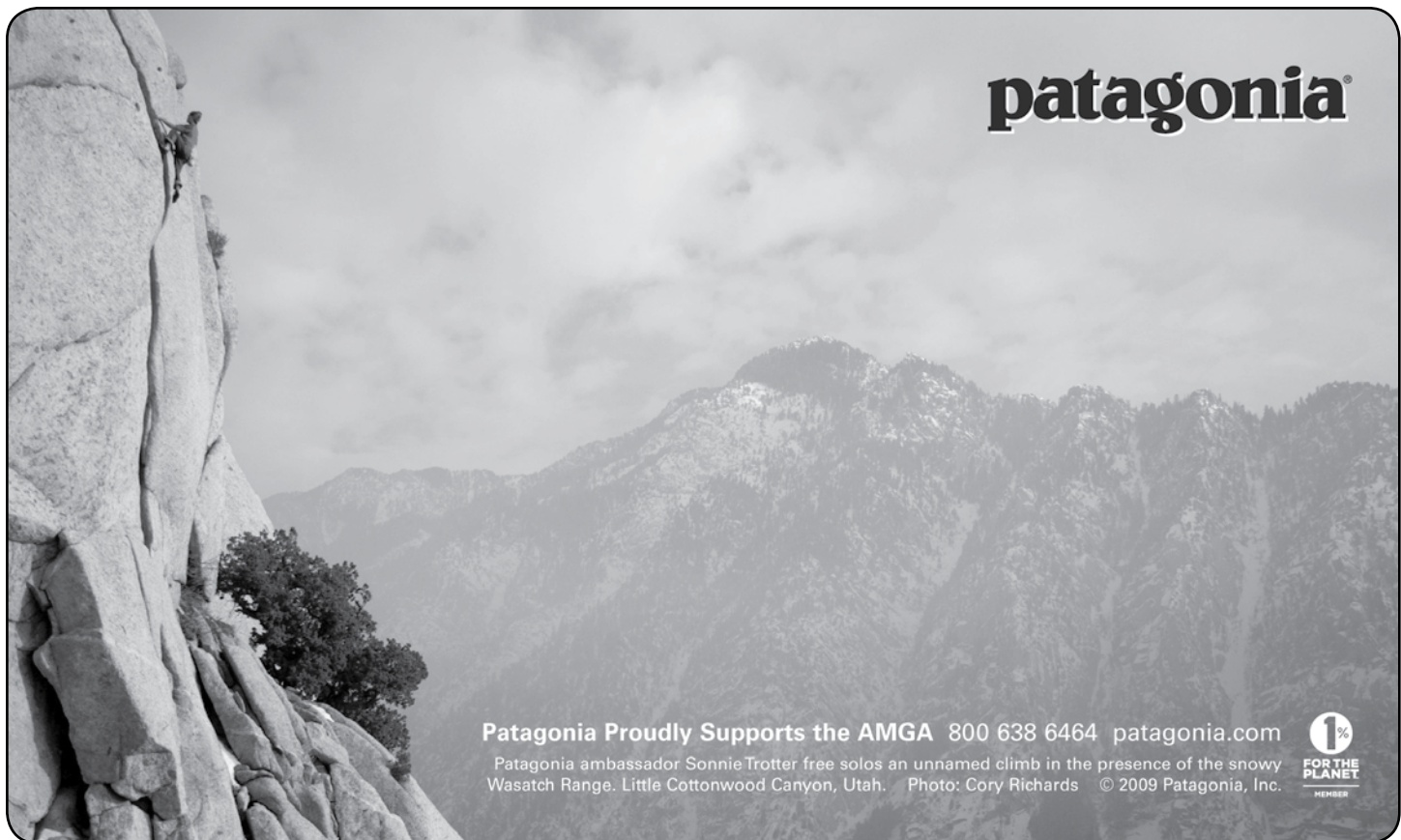
parent that without support from our members, partners, and board of directors our ability to move forward with regards to immediate access is somewhat paralyzed. A survey has been developed by both the CGF and AMGA to gain critical information from our membership with hopes that a member-driven and supported plan can be worked out within the next few years.

AMGA Obtains International Endorsement: With unanimous support from all members of the Union Internationale des Associations D'Alpinisme (UIAA) Training Standards Working Group and Pierre Humblet, the chair of the Mountaineering Commission, the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) is proud to announce that its Single Pitch Instructor Certification Program (SPI) earns the highly respected international training label through the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation.

With the UIAA Training Label, the AMGA is able to prove that their training and assessment method for the SPI program have been independently examined by the UIAA and meets the common international standards for a national training and certification program. This makes it possible for professionals from different countries to recognize each other's qualifications.

AMGA Programs Approved for Academic Credit:

The AMGA is extremely proud to announce that its' introductory level programs have been accepted and approved by the academic committee of the University of Utah. The opportunity now exists such that students of an AMGA course can elect to receive credit from the University of Utah upon completion. These courses are listed within the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Land Based courses in the University's Catalogue. The University of Utah is the only University currently providing this option to AMGA students.



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Patagonia ambassador Sonnie Trotter free solos an unnamed climb in the presence of the snowy Wasatch Range. Little Cottonwood Canyon, Utah. Photo: Cory Richards © 2009 Patagonia, Inc.



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AMGA Gives Back to its' Members: In 2009 the AMGA is proud to have awarded \$53,000 in full or partial scholarships and/or subsidies to 63 members thanks to the support from our corporate partners, private donors and scholarship funds. Vital contributions from: Arc'teryx, Backcountry Access, Black Diamond, Gore-Tex®, Mammut, Marmot, Mountain Hardware, Patagonia, Petzl, The North Face, Walker Family Foundation, and the LOR Foundation has helped make training and certification obtainable for aspiring guides in 2009. This is a 23% growth from 2008! The AMGA looks forward to working with these companies in 2010.

Organization Wide Growth: As of June 1, 2009 there are 1,612 members of the American Mountain Guides Association. This is an outstanding 23% growth from 2008! We owe this growth to the burgeoning Single Pitch and Climbing Wall Instructor programs and to the overall success of our training and certification programs.

Tried, True and Tested- AMGA Certification: Since 1991, the AMGA has trained over thousands of aspiring professionals and has issued over 2,330 certifications! Currently there are: 53 IFMGA Guides via the AMGA, 183 Rock Guides, 83 Rock Instructors, 148 Alpine Guides, 10 Ski Guides, 106 Ski Mountaineering Guides, 413 Single-Pitch Instructors, 200 Top Rope Site Managers, and 214 Climbing Wall Instructors that are current members of the AMGA!

The Climbing Trifecta Ascends to New Heights: A National Policy Summit was held in Golden, CO this February with representatives from the AF, AAC and AMGA. Our goal was to identify the common points of interest and potential conflict areas between the three organizations and come up with a plan of action for dealing with the conflict areas to ensure the longevity and potency of the joint relationship even in the face of our differences. A joint policy statement on the subjects of: rapture and endangered species, fixed anchors, and recreation fees was composed and agreed on by the Executive Directors of all three organizations.

The AMGA Launches New Online Database: Members can maintain contact information, renew and pay automatically online, register for courses, view and download course information, forms, and evaluations, print out membership card. Instructors can download rosters and student information, submit student and program evaluations and Contract Providers can create new course offerings, submit evaluations online, and submit rosters online.

AMGA Brings Together the Front Range Climbing Community: The Pete Takeda Slide Show presentation on June 6, 2009 was originally

created to honor Pete Takeda and his book AN EYE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD and help raise money for the AMGA. However, with the recent news of tragically losing three amazing climbers, the event appropriately became a tribute to Jonny Copp, Micah Dash, and Wade Johnson. Over 80 people showed up to support the rescue team sent over to China as well as to mourn this great loss.

AMGA Hops Aboard the Social Networking Train: We are working hard to get the word out about the AMGA, its' programs and Certified Guides. While we still see traditional media as effective more and more of our efforts are going into new media including things like Twitter and Facebook. We are finding that using these tools to build a community around the AMGA is proving to be a very effective to keep the communications momentum we need.

AMGA Audits Avalanche Education Program: This winter the AMGA conducted its' first audit of a level 3 avalanche education provider. The American Avalanche institute has gone through the process of submission of curriculum and course itinerary and received approval from the Technical Director and Ski Discipline Coordinators. Currently the AMGA approved course providers of avalanche education are: AIARE, CAA and now AAI.

AMGA Accreditation Program Continues to Grow: The first half of 2009 has been very busy and productive. At the top of the list, new terrain and education standards marks a significant step toward bringing certification and accreditation into closer alignment by removing "experienced based" qualifications for Lead Guides in the rock and alpine disciplines. Lead Guides must now be AMGA Certified for the terrain a program offers activities on.

As of July 1 there are 30 Accredited Programs. This number is up from 27 in 2008 and 25 in 2007. The AMGA is proud to announce that it has awarded accreditation the University of Utah Climbing Programs making it the first University based program to receive this status in over 15 years.

AMGA Works with Outward Bound: The AMGA and Outward Bound have been working together to develop comprehensive training for Outward Bound Rock Instructors that couples Outward Bound curriculum and training with the AMGA Single-Pitch Instructor course and assessment.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to seeing you in October!

Attention all AMGA Members

Summer BLOWOUT Sale is Here!

Renew your membership and receive 10% off total purchase.

- Mammut Champ Pants (Men's 48, Women's 42) - \$70.50
- Mammut Courmeyer Pants (Men's 24,48,50) - \$70.50
- Mammut Outline Zip (Men's XL, Women's L) - \$40.50
- Mammut Stratus Jacket (Men's XL) - \$55.50
- Mammut Women's Pain Jacket (L) - \$70.00
- Marmot Approach Jackets (Men's XXL) - \$20.00

Call the AMGA TODAY to place your order ph: 303.271.0984 or email Katie - katie@amga.com

Shipping will be added

TD CORNER

BY ROB HESS



I HAVE WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY IN MY NEWSLETTERS ABOUT THE MERITS OF ASPIRING GUIDES SEEKING DIVERSE VENUES FOR THEIR GUIDES EDUCATION. WITH THIS CONCEPT IN MIND, WE HAVE STRIVED TO OFFER PROGRAMS IN A VARIETY OF AREAS WITH THE HOPES THAT PARTICIPANTS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DIVERSITY IN FURTHERING THEIR GUIDING EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE. As we all know, there are many ways people learn. As guides, we try to

encompass a number of methods to provide a rewarding and educational experience for our clients. Lecture, practice and real time experience being foundational to the methodology. This concept is ever more important when training guides.

As you all remember, we at the AMGA restructured our programs a few years back, to better prepare aspiring guides for the rigors of the training and certification process. We are continually thinking about and addressing issues regarding the quality and effectiveness of our programs. Aspirant exams were introduced to better prepare candidates for the examination process. In addition, this process allowed participants to achieve aspirant status so they might work and mentor under certified guides in more diverse environments such as the Alps. A positive by product of this process is that participants are taking the advanced courses much more seriously and training hard for the courses.

The biggest problem we have seen in this process is with venue diversity. For various reasons, participants have been taking both the advanced course and certification exam in the same venue. Each venue has distinct advantages and disadvantages. In the end, the best educational tool is to learn from the environment you are in. Lack of terrain diversity greatly reduces the level of experience an individual can gain from the process. As well, having an area totally rehearsed with little option for on-sight guiding, ever more hampers the instructor/examiners ability to view a participants instincts.

Participants are more sophisticated than ever in their ability to gain information regarding an area they will be working in. We have and will always push people to do their homework, gaining info on the area or objective by whatever means possible. Tour plans, guide books, previous experience, local knowledge, blogs, mapping tools and so on are all tools by which we gain knowledge on an area. We can not and must not discourage this behavior, on the other-hand, it is imperative that we see people in diverse terrain and gain insight on their instincts and see them on-sight guide. Having both one's course and exam in the same venue greatly reduces our ability to do so. For this reason, barring any insurance difficulties, we will require that all individuals in the ski discipline, be required to take each course/exam in a different venue from this time forward. We will be sure to have an extensive offering of locations, that are monetarily easy to get to, so that this puts as little burden as

possible on the participants. We are starting this methodology with the ski discipline, but will eventually do so in the Alpine and the rock.

Other business; an issue we continually battle with is the evaluation process. When is it appropriate to let participants know the out come of aspirant and or final exams? Most often, examiners and instructors have not decided the outcome and or completed the written evaluations at the time of the final debrief. The effectiveness of the final debrief is often effected by the participants knowledge of the out come of their exam. Those who pass are psyched and hear little of the feedback and those who do not pass often become defensive and hear little of what is said in the debrief. It is important that instructors do not feel rushed, making hasty decisions. It is in the participants best interest that instructors have adequate time to discuss and reflect on the participants performance. Simply, it is unfair to the participant to get a grade before the written evaluation has been discussed and completed. It is unrealistic to expect that this will be completed by the participants final debrief.

For these reasons, we will no longer give the results of the aspirant and or final exams at the final debrief. Participants will receive a verbal final debrief at the the end of the program , that will discuss the overall performance of the participant from both the examiner and participants perspective. The examiners will then have 2 weeks to complete the written evaluation process and submit your final grade. Access to your evaluation and scores will be available online at the AMGA web site. Of course, if the participants has questions and concerns, they will be able to contact their examiners directly. Of note, this procedure is not without precedence, as this is how the Canadians approach the evaluation process.

There are other important changes looming and parts of our program that will evolve, but for now this what is on the table. I hope you all have a busy and safe summer season, stay dry and have fun!



AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009 POSITION STATEMENTS



KEITH GARVEY
IFMGA Mountain Guide
AMGA Board Member &
Technical Committee Member
AMGA Instructor Pool Member
Certified Guides Federation
President
Founder of All Mountain
Adventures

Finishing up my first three-year term, I fully understand the internal functions of the AMGA and the time commitment it requires working for our membership. I truly hope to continue my dedication to this organization by serving a second term.

In my eleven years as an AMGA member I have always supported and helped the organization grow and prosper in many ways. In my first five years I gave a great deal of time and money going through the AMGA training and certification program, eventually receiving my IFMGA certification. In 2004, I was accepted into the instructor pool and soon after began serving on the technical committee. In these positions I was introduced to a strong contingency of AMGA members and have seen the many challenges guides face working in the US. So in 2007, I ran and was elected to the AMGA board to serve our guiding community.

With access as my number one priority, I accepted the presidency of the Certified Guides Federation (CGF) in the hopes of addressing this issue. The CGF is now in its second year of operation with 35 members, a premier insurance policy, and permits to key venues within the US. However, we are still far from wide spread access. With current funding we foresee limited potential for growth. It is imperative the AMGA supports a long term solution to access within the US for our guides and for international access. This is an obligation of the AMGA from the IFMGA and should not be taken lightly as we could jeopardize our international qualification, which is ultimately the backbone of our organization. I am a strong advocate for seeking long term access solutions for everyone (independent guides, guide services, and international guides).

I also support continued growth of our organization, as it is mandatory for long term success. I am a strong proponent for seeking future fundraising opportunities, more effective ways to market certified guides, lower program costs, and continued efforts to promote the AMGA with land managers. I also believe in providing more membership benefits such as inexpensive health insurance, workers compensation, life insurance, and continuing education. These are all very important issues that I will work on for our membership.

As an elected AMGA board member, I will combine my leadership positions to keep a clear and well informed voice from our membership to the board. The AMGA is a great organization with an amazing membership! I welcome individuals to contact me with questions or comments. I would be honored to serve you and continue contributing my energy into effective and positive growth.

Thank you for all your considerations.
 keith@allmountainadventures.com
 970-596-0619



DAVID LOVEJOY
 I consider myself more of an outdoor skills instructor and teacher trainer than a mountain guide. The vast majority of my career has been as faculty at Prescott College where I teach and coordinate backcountry skiing, mountaineering, snow dynamic studies, and wilderness leadership within the adventure education program. I have served in this position for 31 years. Although I have great respect for the high technical standards embodied in AMGA credentialing, I have never sought certification. If elected to the board, I would promote a broader view of attributes considered fundamental to

guiding. These would include client/guide relations, environmental ethics, and social and cultural impacts. I would also assist in seeking ways of integrating AMGA certification with one or more college programs, thus enabling aspiring guides to qualify for financial aid/ educational loans.



MARTY MOLITORIS
AMGA Certified Rock and
Alpine Guide
Owner of Alpine Endeavors

I would like to ask for your vote to be on the board of directors. My years of experience as a member, guide, and a guide service owner make me a worthy candidate for the position.

I am, and have always been a strong advocate of all the AMGA offers and stands for. In addition to having participated in all the rock and alpine courses and exams, I founded and direct a year-round AMGA accredited service employing all AMGA certified guides, and am a member of the instructor pool as well as past member of the accreditation review team. These experiences with the AMGA, as well as the various aspects of guiding and operating a service: insurance, permits, management, and the field work give me the background needed to serve the AMGA and its members.

Guiding is something I take very seriously and I pledge to put in the time and financial requirements that being a board member requires so I can help the AMGA continue to grow and make the profession stronger for guides in this country. Please feel free to call or email me with any questions.

Sincerely,
 Marty Molitoris
 845-658-3094
 Marty@alpineendeavors.com



SILAS ROSSI
AMGA Certified Rock and
Alpine Guide
Founder of Alpine Logic

Having been employed by guide services across the US, ranging from small independent schools to the largest guiding companies, I bring a diverse guiding and climbing school management background and broad

perspective on our industry to the AMGA BOD. If elected to the BOD, I will focus on three areas.

1. Improved access for certified guides. Determine whether or not it is ethically and financially acceptable for the AMGA to absorb the CGF. Gaining access for certified guides should a priority of the AMGA.
2. Develop a plan to work with and distinguish the AMGA from other climbing instructor organizations. This is an issue that affects each climbing guide and instructor in the US. It demands attention and energy.
3. Improve the AMGA guide training curriculum. Having viewed the entire curriculum from the standpoint of a guide pursuing IFMGA status, I know the curriculum well and see room for improvement.



MARTIN VOLKEN
IFMGA Mountain Guide
Owner of Pro Guiding Service

It was the moon of the heavy grape in 1996 when I got certified as an IFMGA guide in Switzerland (I know – that was many moons ago).

I founded, have owned and operated my own

gear shop since 1991 in the Seattle area, founded my own guiding office in 1999 and have operated that since then as well. I work in a consulting role for Outdoor Research and K2 Sports. I am a husband and father of two lovely teenagers, a NOLS semester and instructor course graduate and have live in the US half of my life. In 2000 I started working as an instructor / examiner for the AMGA in the Ski and Alpine Discipline and have taken the candidates' abuse ever since.

My international and immigrant background has forced me consider and appreciate a lot of different viewpoints such as the European IFMGA perspective versus the American one, the independent guides versus the guiding service owners perspective, the painful reality of trying to stay fiscally viable versus simply sticking to the ideals that the AMGA is supposed to stand for.

1. In the big picture I still consider the AMGA in its formative stage and I believe therefore that it is crucial right now that the course quality and consistency is paramount. The written framework is great, I would like to do my part to make sure this framework gets implemented.
2. Growth should be a byproduct of consistent course and exam quality coupled with a strong product value. Currently the "product value" of our certification lacks the ultimate payout for the formative guide, which is undoubtedly access. They have got to have the right to go and exercise their newly acquired profession. If elected to the board, I would like to do my part to make progress on the access front. Specifically, I believe that I can build a bridge between guiding service owners and independent guides.
3. Last but not least I would love to see the AMGA make concrete steps towards inserting itself into a larger Outdoor Recreation Picture. If elected I would like to start out by explaining what I mean by this exactly and then explore (with the help of others) how we bring this message to Agency Managers, Resort Owners, City Council members and Politicians. I know it sounds crazy, but there might be a way.

Feel free to contact me at martinvolken@proguiding.com

AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT - 2009

Please take a moment to vote for three individuals to be seated on the AMGA Board of Directors in October. Only current Certified Guides, Individual Members, Certified SPI and Certified TRSM's 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 in the summer Mt. Bulletin or online at www.amga.com. Submit your ballot via mail to PO Box 1739, Boulder, CO 80306, by fax to 303.271.1377 or email your votes to katie@amga.com. Ballots will be accepted until Monday, September 28, 2009. Election results will be posted on the AMGA website and announced by October 12, 2009. New AMGA Board members will be seated at the Annual Meeting.

Vote for **three** of the following individuals:

- Keith Garvey
- David Lovejoy
- Marty Molitoris
- Silas Rossi
- Martin Volken

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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Picture: Petzl Luna

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pat.

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AMGA PROGRAMS APPROVED FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT

The AMGA is extremely proud to announce that its' introductory level programs have been accepted and approved by the academic committee of the University of Utah. The opportunity now exists such that students of an AMGA course can elect to receive credit from the University of Utah upon completion. These courses are listed within the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Land Based courses in the University's Catalogue. The University of Utah is the only University currently providing this option to AMGA students.

The academic credit allowance for the following AMGA courses will officially become active this fall 2009 semester with a start date of August 24th:

- Climbing Wall Instructor Course
- Single Pitch Instructor Course
- Alpine Guides Course
- Rock Instructor Course
- Ski Guides Course

Each class allows for 3 credits that will yield a letter grade. The cost of these 3 credits per course is \$140.00.

Different situations exist if a student of one of the above AMGA courses decides to elect the credit option:

1. If the student is current at the University of Utah, the class is added into their current transcript.
2. If the student is current at another University, the credit becomes transferable assuming their university allows this (typically not an issue).
3. If the student is not current with any University, a transcript is kept on file at the University of Utah representing the course or courses taken and letter grade earned. This transcript can then be accessed when needed by the student.

Our University has assigned a course category and number to each of the above courses. The courses are all listed in the PRTL category which is short for, "Parks, Recreation & Tourism – Land Based." The following is how the courses are listed:

- PRTL 1246 – AMGA Ski Guides Course
- PRTL 1247 – AMGA Rock Instructor Course
- PRTL 1248 – AMGA Alpine Guides Course
- PRTL 1249 – AMGA Climbing Wall Instructor Course
- PRTL 1250 – AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course

This can be viewed via the online course catalogue for PRTL courses at: <http://www.acs.utah.edu/GenCatalog/crsdesc/prtl.html>. The advanced level guides courses will be proposed and hopefully approved during September, 2009. Our hope is to go live with the credit allowance for these courses at the start of the Spring 2010 semester.

For more information please contact:

Nate Smith, University of Utah Outdoor Recreation Program
email: nate.smith@health.utah.edu
ph: 801-581-8516

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ANNUAL MEETING 2009 ~ MOAB & AMGA ANNUAL AWARDS

Mark your calendars, buy your plane ticket or pack your truck and get ready for some splitter cracks! We have officially set the dates for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Moab, UT.

Oct. 24-26 - WFR Recertification
Oct. 25-26 - Leave No Trace trainer course
Oct. 27 - Technical Committee Meeting
Oct. 28 - Board of Directors Climbing Day, Round Table Meeting
Oct. 29 - BOD Meeting, Professional Development Clinics, & Opening Night Event
Oct. 30 - Professional Development Clinics & Annual Meeting Main Event
Oct. 31 - Professional Development Clinics & Guide Olympics
Nov. 1-2 - Instructor Pool Training

To register for the WFR Refresher or Leave No Trace Trainer Course, or for more information please contact katie@amga.com

The AMGA Annual Meeting is a time-honored tradition that brings together the largest gathering of American mountain guides and climbing instructors. 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.

We look forward to seeing you in Utah this fall!

The time has arrived to nominate guides worthy for the AMGA's Annual Lifetime Achievement Award and Outstanding Guide Award! Provided below is a description of the awards and qualifications. Please submit nominations to katie@amga.com by August 29th, 2009. Include a brief description explaining why you think this individual should receive an award.

The Lifetime Achievement in Mountain Guiding Award is to honor outstanding Americans, who by their efforts over a period of years, have made contributions of significant value to the profession of mountain guiding, and have reflected credit upon America and themselves.

A nominee for consideration for the Lifetime Achievement in Mountain Guiding Award shall:

- Be 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;
- Have exhibited qualities of loyalty, integrity, and moral courage worthy of emulation; and
- Be well and favorable known as a person of ability and character.

American Mountain Guides Outstanding Guide Award is awarded annually for the most outstanding mountain guide achievement in the profession of mountain guiding for the year.

A nominee for consideration as an American Mountain Guides Association Outstanding Guide Awards shall:

- Be an individual, who has made an outstanding contribution or achievement of significant value to the mountain guiding profession in the year;
- Have exhibited qualities of loyalty, integrity, and moral courage worthy of emulation;
- Be a member of the American Mountain Guides Association; and
- Be well and favorable known as a person of ability and character.

Annual awards shall be presented at the Awards Ceremony, which is to take place at the AMGA Annual Meeting in Moab, UT in October 2009.

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RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS

BY ED CROTHERS



ALONG WITH MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS ACCREDITATION DIRECTOR, I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A VARIETY OF PROJECTS. RECENTLY, THE BIGGEST PROJECT HAS BEEN UPDATING THE AMGA RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN. A first draft is under review by various people both in and out of the AMGA office and members of the Board of Directors. The goal is to have a finalized version available for the Board's approval at the October Annual Meeting. My intention here is to share some of the things I have learned along the way.

Obvious benefits to having a risk management plan that addresses the points listed above includes: The plan demonstrates to anyone reviewing it the program's acknowledgement of risk and commitment to mitigate it. Staff are given tools to help them manage risk. In the event of a worse case scenario, field and administrative staff have clear guidelines for an appropriate and organized response. The importance of the last point cannot be overstated. Trying to improvise when dealing with a death or serious injury is an invitation to disaster.

Obvious benefits to having a risk management plan that addresses the points listed above includes: The plan demonstrates to anyone reviewing it the program's acknowledgement of risk and commitment to mitigate it. Staff are given tools to help them manage risk. In the event of a worse case scenario, field and administrative staff have clear guidelines for an appropriate and organized response.

When conducting accreditation reviews, analyzing a program's risk management plan is one of the more important aspects of the review. Also, when advising guides who are considering starting a guide service, even as a sole proprietor, I stress the importance of having a well thought out and written risk management plan. Some reasons for this are readily apparent and others are not.

Recently I came across the website of a guide service that stated, "rock climbing is safe!" (This company has no affiliation with the AMGA.) This marketing strategy appeared aimed at potential clients with little understanding of climbing beyond Hollywood portraits of our sport. Among a host of other concerns, I wondered if this business owner truly believed that statement and, if so, how risk was managed at this program. Couldn't help but wonder if someone marketing climbing as "free of risk or harm" really gets it.

In any case, an important starting point for risk management is acknowledging the inherent risks associated with the activities engaged in and in the products a program sells. Next, is accepting those risks. Finally, coming up with ways to manage those risks. A good risk management plan addresses all three of these points by doing the following:

- Giving the goals of the risk management plan and philosophy of risk management within a given program. Tying risk management to a program's mission statement is often included in this section.
- Listing the roles and responsibilities of all staff members as they relate to risk management.
- Looking at risks and management of those risks in all environments and activities a program offers activities in.
- Presenting administrative processes. These include such things as client screening, care and maintenance of gear, incident reporting, required emergency medical certifications, etc.
- Outlining incident response procedures. Generally this information deals with incidents where life or limb are not at risk.
- Outlining serious incident response. These incidents are the worst-case scenarios in which life or limb have been threatened.

Some less obvious benefits of a good risk management plan are that it can help when shopping for liability insurance. It can be used as a tool to educate insurance providers as to the actual, as opposed to the perceived, risks associated with climbing and demonstrate that a program is dedicated to managing those risks. Land Managers tend to look more favorably upon programs with good risk management plans. Again, this can be used as a tool to educate land managers that climbing programs are responsible users of the public lands. A good plan can go a long way in protecting a program involved in a lawsuit where negligence is at issue. Last of all, it is the right thing to do. A good plan and commitment to risk management can go a long way toward keeping staff and clients out of harms way.

Finally, a risk management plan should be thought of as a "living document," meaning it is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. When reviewing the plan be certain that practices in the field correspond with guidelines and procedures as outlined in the risk management plan, guide and operations manuals. Check for "rigid wording" such as must, always, never, etc. If a given guideline "must" be adhered to, it is fine to use that wording. However, if there is the possibility that a "reasonable and prudent" person might stray from the guideline, avoid using such definitive language. Avoid using the "s-word:" Safe. Staff and clients cannot be kept safe and an implied promise that no harm will come to participants can open the door to some serious problems in the event of a lawsuit. Leave room for staff judgment and state that clearly in written materials. Be certain to include a review of the risk management plan during staff trainings.

I hope this information can be of some use. Once the Board approves the AMGA Risk Management Plan, my intention is to make it available as a template for any climbing program, guide or climbing instructor looking to either draft a risk management plan or revise an existing plan. In the meantime, if you have questions related to this topic, feel free to contact me at the AMGA office or at ed@amga.com. Cheers.



JUNE AND JULY ARE SLOW MONTHS FOR AMGA GUIDE PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, THERE STILL ARE MANY GOOD THINGS HAPPENING WITH PROGRAMS AT THE MOMENT. ONE THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS IS OUR NEW ONLINE DATABASE AND THE ABILITY TO APPLY FOR PROGRAMS ONLINE.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR UPDATE

BY HENRY BEYER

As many of you know the AMGA recently invested money and time into the development of an online database, my.amga.com. This database gives each member a personal "member page" and allows each member to update their personal information, register for programs, view program evaluations, and soon pay membership dues and program tuition, all online. Starting with the 2010 program schedule all

students interested in participating in an AMGA Guide Track program will be required to register for programs online at my.amga.com. Through this paperless process prospective students can confirm that they meet the pre-requisites of the course, fill out their resume online, and download the necessary forms. The student, once registered, can then track the enrollment process online. They can see which documents still need to be turned in, how much they have paid, and what their enrollment status is—under review, enrolled, wait list to name a few. Students can also see who else has registered for the course, who the instructors are and how to contact them. Much of my job now is assisting students navigate this new application process. To help the transition be even smoother we will be offering a few clinics demonstrating how to access and use the new database at this year's Annual Meeting being held in Moab, UT.

One of the key features is the online resume. The resume is unique to each program a participant enrolls in and may be added to at any time. The requirements for each program are listed above and below the resume itself. Because of the competitive nature of AMGA programs it is often necessary for students to register for a program before they have met all the prerequisites, so there is even a space available for students to outline what they are missing and how they intend to complete the prerequisites prior to the start of the course or exam. Furthermore, having the resume online gives instructors an opportunity to review student resumes prior to the start of a program. All of this will hopefully make the application process simpler.

This is a big change, so I anticipate a lot of phone calls and emails asking for assistance. Please contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions you may have. And as always thank you for participating in the training and certification process. Cheers.

CERTIFIED GUIDES FEDERATION UPDATE

BY SCOTT SCHELL

I hope this edition of the Mountain Bulletin finds you enjoying a prosperous summer guiding season. Here in the Northwest, we're experiencing unseasonably warm and dry weather (yes, the sun does exist in the NW) which is giving us plenty of opportunity to explore everything from our American Alps to our local crags. I'm writing you today to ask for your help. Your organization – the AMGA – and the CGF are at a crossroads. We are asking for your input as to how the AMGA and the CGF can better serve your needs and how we should approach some of the paramount issues facing us as American mountain guides. Many issues are at hand – everything from access to wages to IFMGA reciprocity to how can guide services and independent guides exist in a truly symbiotic relationship.

In order to get a better sense of how you want your organization to evolve, the CGF along with the help of the AMGA have put together a survey about the partnership of our organizations and the issues facing guiding in the US. The questions in the survey will help us better understand your needs as an AMGA mountain guide working in the US and abroad. Each guiding entity in the US – the independent guide, the guide service, and the guiding organization – all serve important functions and have difficulty flourishing on their own. Therefore, working together is the most efficient approach to meet our end goal: to make a sustainable living in the mountains by providing a safe and enjoyable experience to the visiting public.

As I'm sure you're all aware by now, making a living in the mountains can prove challenging. Many things are out of our control such as the weather, client ability, and economic melt downs, and so on. On the other hand, many of the apparent hurdles can be mitigated by a little tour planning, so to speak. By participating in the upcoming survey, you will be helping both the CGF and the AMGA in our information gathering session that will allow us to plan our best route towards the future.

Both the CGF and the AMGA are looking forward to your participation in the survey. Please stay tuned to your email account as the survey will be sent out in coming days – if you haven't updated your email account recently, please contact the AMGA Office at 303-271-0984 and let them know that you'd like to participate in the survey.

Cheers and safe travels in the mountains,
 Scott D. Schell, Executive Director, Certified Guides Federation
 Email: cgfinfo@mac.com
 Phone: 206.909.0203



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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.

AMGA LOGO USE

As summer enters full swing, we wanted to provide a reminder on the benefits of using the AMGA logo and the policies governing its use. AMGA certified guides and climbing instructors who hold current membership have access to the AMGA certification logo for their respective discipline. Use of the AMGA logo is a fantastic marketing tool; whether on a website, in promotional brochures, or on a business card. The eye-catching, full color logo informs the public that you have met the high technical and professional standards of the AMGA, an internationally recognized, professional body. The AMGA logo is available for IFMGA certification; all Alpine, Rock, and Ski certifications; Top Rope Site Managers, Single Pitch Instructors, and Climbing Wall Instructors; and Accredited Programs. If you're not taking advantage of AMGA logo use, contact the office today to request a high-resolution copy in JPEG format.

Some important things to keep in mind about AMGA logo use:

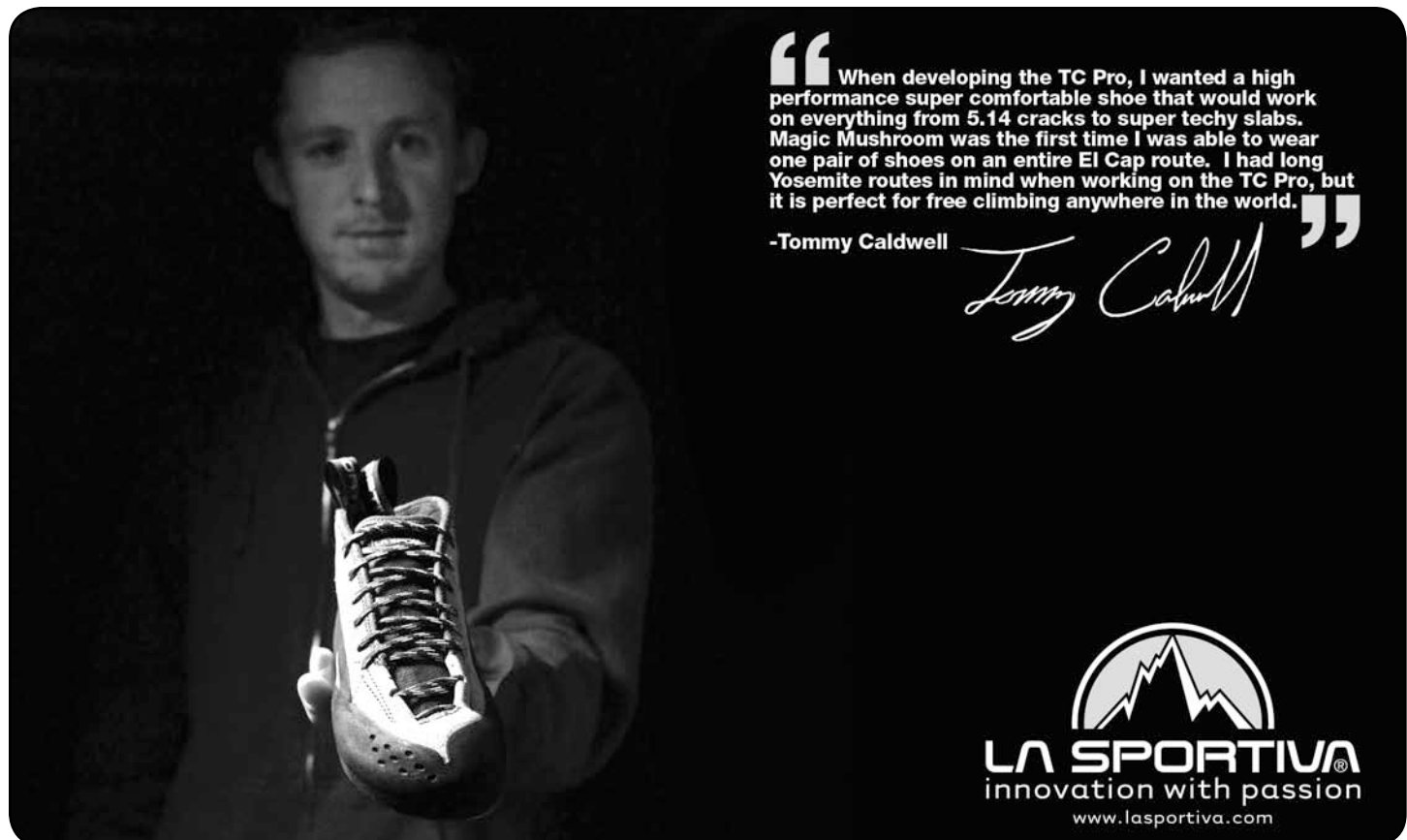
- You must only use the certification logo that matches your current certification. Use of the general AMGA logo is not allowed.
- AMGA membership must be current to continue use of the logo. An expired member may not use the AMGA logo or advertise as being AMGA certified until their membership is current.
- For programs that employ a number of certified (and non-certified) guides, the logo may only be used next to the guide's bio that holds AMGA certification. Text must state who holds the certification.

AMGA CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

All AMGA members should strive for the highest levels of ethical and professional conduct in their business and personal lives. The AMGA's Code of Ethics and Conduct outlines some expectations the association has of its members and accredited programs. This document outlines such principles as client safety, public safety, personal limitations, Leave No Trace etiquette, and adherence to applicable laws while working in foreign countries or on public lands domestically. AMGA members are representatives of the association at all times and should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects well on the AMGA. It should be noted that violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct might result in disciplinary action. To review the AMGA's Code of Ethics and Conduct in its entirety and learn what is expected of all AMGA members, visit the AMGA website at http://amga.com/about/code_of_ethics.php

“ When developing the TC Pro, I wanted a high performance super comfortable shoe that would work on everything from 5.14 cracks to super techy slabs. Magic Mushroom was the first time I was able to wear one pair of shoes on an entire El Cap route. I had long Yosemite routes in mind when working on the TC Pro, but it is perfect for free climbing anywhere in the world. ”

-Tommy Caldwell



GEAR REVIEW

Mammut Revelation

9.2mm 60m

By Amos Whiting

I have guided with the Revelation 9.2 rope for a couple of years now with success and recently started using a new one this spring. Because it is a smaller diameter rope I have used it primarily in Alpine terrain guiding in Aspen and Ouray CO, European Alps and AMGA courses in Rock Mountain National Park. I have also used the Revelation for guiding multi-pitch rock while trailing two ropes. The Revelation has a great feel in the hands, and handles well with or without gloves. When brand new, like many ropes, it is a bit slick and therefore one must be careful while belaying steeper technical terrain as it can be harder to arrest a lead fall. This combined with its smaller diameter makes it not the best rope for cragging, or use with a GriGri. Where the Revelation really shines is in the Alpine, it is light and the dry treatment still works even after a year or two. Despite the small diameter, it holds up well to terrain belays and being dragged through loose rocks. The Revelation is not a rope for all uses, such as heavy single, or multi pitch rock guiding, but is excellent in a quiver. It is a great all around ice or alpine rope, and is very durable. It also would be a great rope for the occasional hard long route or long single pitch project where every ounce counts and you want a spongy belay when you lob off.

PMI Rope Spire

10.2mm 60m Dry

By Keith Garvey

With the revolution of all the 9 mm ropes on the market today, I was at first a little skeptical uncoiling this new 10.2 mm rope put out by PMI called the Spire. I have been caught up in this revolution and primarily using 9.2 to 9.8 mm ropes for alpine and rock guiding. Where less weight makes for easier climbing and skinner ropes pull effortlessly through auto-locking belay devices. The uses I found this rope to excel in were on single pitch climbs, top-ropes, and short multi-pitch routes where weight is not as much a factor, but durability is essential for longevity of the rope and of course your pocket book. Even after a week of use the burly sheath never showed wear, and just after a few days of use the rope softened and had great hand. This rope is the king for your ruff and tough outings and I would recommend PMI's 9.4 Elite or 9.7 Arete for those longer grueling routes where weight is a primary concern.

Sterling Rope Ion

9.5mm 70 m

By Dale Remsberg

Most of my ropes are of the 60 meter variety but my quiver does include several 70 meter ropes for special occasions. For guiding I rarely use a 70 meter rope as it means I need to carry more gear and often staying closer to my guests facilitates better communication and coaching. Recently I tested the 70 meter 9.5 Ion. Most of the use came from longer pitches in Eldorado Canyon where the extra 10 meters helped with lowers and top roping two pitches for after work training sessions. The real test came from the Rainbow Wall in Red Rocks. With a long approach, 13 pitches and multiple 5.12 cruxes it was the perfect outing for this light 70 meter rig. The hand on this rope is decent but like many Sterling ropes it is a bit stiffer and harder to feed through auto blocking devices for top belaying. The flip side of a tighter weave in the sheath is that this rope will take a beating and live to tell the story, a plus for these financially challenging times. We used a Gri Gri for the lead belay and it fed through this device like butter but still felt like it engaged the cam quickly. Unfortunately my partner had one lead fall on one of the upper crux pitches but the Ion's elongation made for a nice soft catch with minimal rope in service helping prevent ripping his Yellow C3 in the soft rock. The rope did not come with a factory middle mark but I took care of that prior to the climb. In my opinion the middle mark is a valuable tool and not everyone can afford a bio pattern rope so I really wish manufactures would solve the middle mark dilemma. After a beautiful summit we rapped the route in 40 minutes with the help of the Ion skipping several stations. The Ion had very little twisting even though it was practically out of the bag and fed through our ATC guides smoothly and predictably during the raps. I'm excited to have this rope at my disposal and plan on using it a fair bit for my personal climbing, and with many more long routes awaiting the 70 meter Ion will be in my pack. Ion's stats: 9.5 mm, 70 meter option tested, dynamic elongation 30.8 %, Impact force 8.4 kn, static elongation 10 %, UIAA falls 5, Weight 60 g/M.

Petzl Gri-Gri

By Rob Hess

The gri-gri belay device, having just turned 18, is a device that was designed by Petzl as a single pitch/cragging/ belay device. Due to its ability to lock off a climber in a fall if the belay hand is dropped and its smooth lowering characteristics, this device has been adopted as the standard for belay devices by rock climbing gyms. There are other devices out there that do the same thing, and of course there are pros and cons to all, but the gri-gri seems to be the device most widely used for one pitch cragging. As I inspect a new gri-gri and the one I bought back in the early 90's, it is amazing to see that the device is totally unchanged. This fact is testament to the idea that when Petzl releases a product, it is usually very well thought out, tested and manufactured. Put this device in the hands of a lighter, less experienced belayer, add a pair of gloves and you have a recipe for pushing hard on a rock climb with a high level of confidence that you will not be dropped. On the flip side, to use this device properly, especially belaying a leader, one must adopt a belay hand motion somewhat contrary to traditional belay device techniques. This has allowed for certain problems to come up in that if an individual keeps hold of the device in the way that is easiest to let rope out to a leader, then they risk allowing the rope to run freely through the device thus essentially dropping the climber. Petzl has addressed this by revising the belaying techniques recommended for letting rope out to lead climbers. For heady traditional leads, where protection is small and or dubious in quality, the gri-gri may not be the device of choice as it is not very dynamic in its stopping power, it tends to stop you fast with no slip. This might be just what is needed to compromise that sketchy piece of pro. As well, this device is not generally used for multi pitch climbing as it is not very versatile or in other words it does not accept two ropes and so it is not useful as a rappel device. It is not considered a true auto-locking device in that when holding someone it must be attended. Bump the lever arm inadvertently and off they go. The auto-locking devices out there such as the Reverso 2, the guide ATC etc. are much better choices for multi pitch activities as they are in fact true auto-locking devices, traditional belay devices and allow you to rappel on two ropes. All this being said, the grigri is still the standard by which others are evaluated. It provides a smooth, clean and very safe belay for all levels of climber. Go to a sport crag, and 9 out of every 10 climbers will be using a gri-gri.

Mammut Revelation

PMI Rope Spire

Sterling Rope Ion

Petzl Gri-Gri

Trango Cinch

By Joey Thompson

The Trango Cinch has a personal ambience with a technical design. We as guides being familiar with the concepts of Cinch like devices, it is the user's responsibility to read and understand the instructions before using the Cinch. I used the device for several days out in the field working on multiple guiding techniques. For redirected lowers I found lowering to be very smooth and effortlessly once finding the right balance of tension on the release lever. Even in lowering right off the belay loop of the harness with a redirect of the rope through a carabiner on the leg loop of my harness. As for managing the belay from above it allows an easy pull through the device with sub 10mm ropes. This is especially good for those of us managing tendonitis in our elbow. The Cinch is light weight and with a combination of Trango's supper fly's locking carabiner this creates a perfect match. After working with the Cinch for a bit I found it overall an efficient and quality belay / rappel tool used for technical rock climbing made here in the USA.

Petzl Reverso 3

By Majka Burhardt

I had an original Reverso the moment it came on the market... and then I proceeded to go through one a season for the next several years. Not anymore: the new Reverso 3 is the long awaited re-design that meets and exceeds the competition. It's 30% lighter than others on the market and has buffered side walls to resist the wear that was common on the previous model. The new asymmetrical V-shape grooves provide better friction, and distribute the wear over a broader surface area. An easy release notch works with a carabiner or a sling and the keeper cable is similarly short to the previous model, holding it tight to your belay. Last but not least, it comes in assorted colors from the sedate to the showy so you can get several to suit your mood.

Black Diamond ATC Guide

By Katie Kelly

Black Diamond's ATC guide is a great belay device. It is easy to feed free rope, better locking and overall "seems stronger". I used it in the climbing gym, sporting climbing on a 10.2mm rope and out on a multipitch 9.2 mm rope and in all cases this belay device was smooth, reliable and durable. One main advantage of the ATC Guide is the dual frictions belay and replay modes, a feature that is new to my climbing venture yet very welcomed. In guide mode it locks if someone falls and features a unique release point to help ease the load as you lower a climber regardless of weight difference between climber and belayer. Overall, I am excited with my new ATC Guide and look forward to many more climbing adventures with this trusted device.

Ferrino Approach 50+10

By John Bicknell

You will either love or hate the Ferrino Approach 50. It is a matter of taste. The Ferrino is comfortable, extremely featured, and relatively light for the number of features. I have only been testing it for a couple of weeks, so I cannot speak too confidently of its durability, but it seems well made. The Ferrino has numerous features—top pockets, side pockets, mesh pockets, gear loops, holders for ski, axes, ropes, hydration system compatibility and compression straps. It has a high tech suspension system for breathability and comfort. The fit can be fine tuned to a minute degree. But for all that, it is only two ounces heavier than the Black Diamond Quantum 55 and slightly lighter than the Deuter 45+, so the weight is not really an issue. The ideal use for this pack would be to use it to get everything into basecamp, then use a smaller summit pack for climbing. It carried everything I needed (climbing gear, rope, tent, food etc) into a high basecamp for a four day trip. The pack carried well despite being very heavily loaded and I did not feel as if I needed to solve a Rubik's cube to make everything fit. The first day from basecamp I used the Ferrino for a moderate snow climb with clients. I did not feel it carried that well for climbing but it was fine for this use and I can imagine using it on a multi-day alpine moderate. For more technical rock or ice climbs, I'd have a second climbing pack. Are you a minimalist or do you like features? How you answer that will determine your response to the Ferrino Approach 50.

Marmot Diva 45

By Angela Hawse

This pack has gone through several generations of improvements with the latest being a lighter, with more function design with less bells and whistles. The 45 liter version of the Diva is a versatile choice if you're looking for one pack to do it all. It's a great choice for a multi-day venture; it accommodates all the kit you'll need, carries it comfortably and compresses down nicely for smaller summit pack. The lid is removable, which gives it some extendibility for larger loads and option of removing it if not needed. The pack shape is an improvement over the older Diva model as it is narrower at the bottom, making it carry better and pack easier. New features are lighter weight, more water-proof material, improved suspension, a stretch back panel for crampons, water bottle or a layer, an improved ice tool attachment system (that makes it possible to get your ice axes without taking off the pack) and a hip belt with a small stash pocket and harnessing system for an ice tool or small rack. The internal pocket for hydration and the holes for the tube coming out of the pack are well placed and thought out. On top of the improvements with details, the Diva 45 carries a significant load comfortably.

Jansport Ascent 52 Pack

By Eli Hulmeth

Usually I start my relationship with any new pack with a pair of trauma shears, removing any unnecessary straps, compartments, or other 'extras' that I don't find necessary and don't want to carry. After a month of steady use, I still haven't snipped off any part of this pack and that is my biggest complement on its design. I was able to use this pack extensively on a variety of day trips for both rock climbing and mountaineering and overall I found it comfortable enough for the long carry's and big enough to fit in a days worth of climbing paraphernalia as its 52 liter size seems to be the perfect amount of space. This pack is more of a transporter than a climber as the beefy waist belt and relatively stiff plastic internal back panel provided a lot of torsional rigidity which is nice for carrying loads but too stiff for climbing anything difficult.

Trango Cinch

Petzl Reverso 3

BD ATC Guide

Ferrino Approach 50+10

Marmot Diva 45

Jansport Ascent 52

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