



MOUNTAIN BULLETIN

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Margaret Wheeler

Hi Everyone, What were you up to this January? How was the start of your winter guiding season? How was the ice? The snow? I hope your seasons are busy and your schedules are full.

In this newsletter I will focus on summarizing one aspect of the work we have been doing here at the AMGA: the AMGA-CGF subcommittee. In order to do this effectively, I think it is vital to understand the full history of the relationship between the AMGA and the CGF. 2009 was an intense and busy year, and in many ways was the culmination of work the AMGA and the CGF have been doing since 2005.

On page 3 you will find the AMGA – CGF Timeline. I urge you to take the time and read through it, and make sure you are up to speed on what has developed in our organization. And I urge you to read through the plans we have for the future, in Betsy's description of the Access Director position, and in Scott Schell's information about the transition of the CGF into the CGC – the Certified Guides Cooperative.

Finally, I urge you consider the following thoughts: To date, the AMGA has spent 5 years, and \$33,000 working on the access issue via the CGF – this is in addition to the hundreds of hours and several thousands of dollars put towards credential-based access and other policy initiatives by the AMGA office staff and Board of Directors over the past 30 years. Together with the CGF, we have devoted extensive time and energy throughout the trial and error of researching and understanding what it will take to improve access – and the profession of mountain guiding - in this country. With everything we've learned in 2009, I firmly believe that we are as close as we have ever been to taking the steps to move us forward. *But by no means have we solved the puzzle.* There are far too many variables we can't control, and too much work still to do, to make that claim. However, I do think we have cracked open a door in what previously appeared to be a formidable wall blocking our growth and success as an organization and as a profession.

What we have gained in 2009 is the ability – in the form of information and awareness - to create a plan for the future. That plan includes the joint efforts

of an Access Director and a Certified Guides Cooperative to work together to improve our profession. That work is set out before us, and we will be focusing on that goal in the coming months. Our Board of Directors is responsible for direction in creating a long-term plan, and will be working with every aspect of our organization to gather and formulate goals for the future of the AMGA.

In its part, the CGF has the responsibility to contribute to the long-term plan for guiding in this country by evolving into a Cooperative. But here is the thing about a cooperative: it is different than a nonprofit, different than a club, different than a privately held business. *It is formed for the mutual benefit of its membership, and it needs the support of its members to thrive.*

That's where you all come in. As members, as certified guides, it is time for all of us to contribute what we can to planning for the future. The cooperative model will require time and energy to build as well as resources; all of that, by definition, comes through the work we do.

Do you know what a cooperative is? Do you know how it works, what its structure is, what the benefits are, how it is formed? In the coming months you will hear from the CGF and the AMGA with information, surveys, and requests for time, energy, and contributions. In 2009 we had intense and amazing discussions, and there were many responses to the issues we have been working on. In 2010 I hope we can build and direct the energy of you all, our members. If you support the idea of improving access in the US, then I urge you to get involved: we can't build a cooperative model without you.

Thank you all for your thoughts and opinions – keep them coming, stay in touch, and be careful out there!

MARGARET

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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The AMGA – CGF TIMELINE

2005 – THE VERY BEGINNING

JUNE | The AMGA President reports to the Board of Directors that creating a non-profit cooperation might be the most workable solution to provide reciprocal access for international guides. The Certified Guides Federation (CGF) is created as a Colorado Non-profit Corporation, with the goal of providing international reciprocity.

2006 – THE REORGANIZATION YEAR

OCTOBER | The Certified Guides Federation (CGF) board is restructured. CGF Board members are: Jeff Ward, John Kear, Dale Remsberg, Adrian Ballinger, Joe Vallone, Clint Cook, Amos Whiting, Peter Gould (Lawyer), and Keith Garvey as chair. The Board decides that the CGF will stay a non-profit organization that will be a sister organization to the AMGA.

2007 – THE FIRST YEAR

JANUARY | The CGF requests financial assistance from the AMGA Board of Directors to cover half the initial start-up cost. The AMGA Board of Directors agrees to release \$5,000 immediately and an additional \$5,000 upon receipt and approval of CGF long-range business plan. The Board delineates that the business plan is to show expected revenue and expenses for start up year and operational years.

MAY | AMGA releases \$5,000 to Certified Guides Federation to support initial start up business costs.

SEPTEMBER | AMGA releases the second phase of \$5,000 to Certified Guides Federation.

OCTOBER | CGF hires AMGA Assistant, Justin Yates, to begin work part time, acquiring permits and an insurance policy for CGF members. AMGA offers office resources (computer, phone, printer, internet service, email blasts and space on AMGA website) to support this initiative. Discussions at the October 2007 BOD meeting express the goal that the CGF is to be self-sustaining in the long term.

2008 – THE YEAR OF GROWTH & CHANGE

JANUARY | AMGA releases \$5,000 to Certified Guides Federation after CGF raised \$10,000 to match AMGA to-date contribution. Discussion at the AMGA Board meeting centers around the point that in order to survive in the long term the CGF business model must be self-sustaining. CGF Hires Simon Fryer to build website and initiate insurance research to obtain a policy.

APRIL | CGF obtains a liability insurance policy for its members and begins permit applications.

JUNE | The CGF proposes the AMGA provide \$10,000 in additional support. The \$10,000 contribution served to provide continued startup funding to keep the CGF afloat while obtaining more permits and creating a solid business plan.

JULY | AMGA issues \$10,000 to Certified Guides Federation (as voted by the AMGA Board in the June meeting).

AUGUST | Scott Schell hired to work as Executive Director (ED) of CGF.

OCTOBER | AMGA hosts Regional Round Table Discussion in Bend, Oregon. The goal of the round table is to provide a forum for information exchange and discussion around access issues in the northwest. CGF

Report to the AMGA Board of Directors indicates they have obtained permits in 12 areas, and that the CGF membership costs are being restructured.

DECEMBER | Cameron Banko joins as the CGF legal counsel.

2009 – THE YEAR OF EVOLUTION

JANUARY | CGF brings a proposal to the AMGA Board for funding of \$10,000 in order to increase the part-time work of the CGF ED (Scott Schell). As a result of discussing the proposal, the AMGA BOD forms the AMGA-CGF Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. This subcommittee is directed by the Board to explore options for the future relationship between the CGF and AMGA, and to advise the Board of its findings at the June meeting. The options on the table were:

- 1 The AMGA absorbs the CGF and they become one entity
- 2 The CGF and the AMGA remain separate – in this case there would be two entities, with defined roles in the short and long term.

Committee members are: Margaret Wheeler, Betsy Novak, Scott Schell, Dale Remsberg, Keith Garvey, Jeff Ward, Cameron Banko, Peter Gould, Martin Volken

MAY | AMGA/CGF Ad-Hoc committee meets for 2-days in Boulder, Colorado to explore potential relationship options between the two organizations. The committee findings are as follows:

- 1 The AMGA needs to improve immediate access for individual guides and guide services.
- 2 The AMGA should not and can not absorb the CGF, for reasons of tax structure, permitting laws, liability, and the complex politics of guiding in the US.
- 3 The Subcommittee should continue work to investigate whether the CGF can/should retain its nonprofit status, or if it should become a for-profit entity instead.

JUNE | The AMGA Board receives the report from the AMGA-CGF committee, and charges the committee to continue its work to determine the future structure of the CGF. The Board generally agrees that the AMGA should increase the priority of access, and charges the subcommittee to create a survey for the AMGA membership to gauge their opinions and understanding of the issues. Scott Schell is tasked with the creation of this survey, due out July – August 2009. Scott Soden, AMGA Board member and Treasurer, is added to the subcommittee for financial advising.

JULY | AMGA/CGF Ad-Hoc Committee holds conference call. Scott Soden creates a cost matrix for the existing CGF business plan; this matrix shows that the CGF cannot be self-sustaining under the current membership structure, and offers options for changes to membership costs for the CGF going forward. This matrix prompted the proposal that AMGA member dues should be increased to support the CGF. The findings of the subcommittee are as follows:

- 1 The CGF cannot remain a non-profit, and should pursue transitioning into a for-profit entity in order to meet the requirements of land managers and to be tax compliant.
- 2 The CGF should build a complete business plan

for this structure, and include in the plan a proposal to use an increase in AMGA membership dues to support the CGF.

JULY | AMGA BOD holds a conference call to discuss topics from Ad-Hoc committee's recommendations. The BOD suggests CGF work with the AMGA-CGF subcommittee and the legal and financial counsel of the AMGA to bring a viable business plan to October meeting for review.

SEPTEMBER | AMGA issues \$5,000 to Certified Guides Federation to help keep the business afloat during the transition and building of a new business plan (on the LLC model)

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER | CGF/AMGA survey goes out to membership

OCTOBER | AMGA Board of Directors holds a planning session with the CGF Board of Directors. Both groups review the survey results, which reveal that the AMGA membership varies widely in both understanding of the issues and in opinions for potential solutions. Together the two groups create the idea of short-term and long-term work for access – the short term being the CGF in some form, the long term being the position of an access director at the AMGA.

OCTOBER | The National Round Table in Moab creates a forum for the full spectrum of issues and possibilities with regards to access. All present at the meeting agree that the AMGA should work to improve access. The three main ideas as to how this should occur are:

- 1 Via the CGF
- 2 Via guest guiding programs with existing guide services
- 3 Via a formal position for access policy within the AMGA

OCTOBER | The CGF proposal (for the CGF to transition into an LLC with AMGA financial support) at the Moab board meeting is discussed extensively, and then sent back to the AMGA-CGF subcommittee for further revisions. The committee and the CGF are charged with:

- 1 Filling in missing aspects of the LLC business plan.
- 2 Researching a cooperative model to see if it would be a more successful model to meet the financial, regulatory, and political issues here in the US.

Reasons for this are several: the LLC business plan needed revision; the AMGA membership expressed a variety of opinions as to how the CGF should function; the LLC model would make it very difficult for foreign guides to have reciprocal access through the CGF.

NOVEMBER | AMGA/CGF Ad Hoc committee holds a conference call. During this call the committee decides to table the LLC business plan and focus on the possibility of forming a cooperative. The committee creates task list to gain information about the Cooperative model for the CGF. It is agreed that the CGF must be a stand-alone organization that is fundamentally supported by the AMGA.

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AMGA BOD APPROVES FUNDING FOR ACCESS DIRECTOR POSITION

I am very proud to announce that the AMGA made it through the 2009 harsh economic climate unscathed. Our operational budget, endowments, and investment accounts remain strong and have rebounded since the 2008 losses. Our year end financials are solid and well in the black showing a net income of slightly over \$50K, which is 8% above our budgeted number. This net income can be attributed to above budget gains in contributions and membership income, as well as, below budget expenses in merchandise, contributions, membership, accreditation, and outreach expenses.

Thanks to the fiscally conservative efforts of the National Office Staff, the AMGA is in a position to put a large portion of those surplus funds to good use. In light of the recent survey conducted by the CGF and AMGA and conversations amongst the AMGA membership and Board of Directors it has become ever more apparent there is a need for the AMGA to take direct action towards achieving access for professional guides in this country - above and beyond the already significant effort it has made via the Certified Guides Federation and other policy based initiatives.

At the January Board of Directors Meeting in Salt Lake City, the Board stepped up to the plate and agreed to allocate funds necessary for hiring and supporting a part-time Access Director position. The AMGA Board of Directors realizes that to not take action now has far-reaching implications that go beyond membership development and involve international relations, extensive outreach to land management agencies, growing brand awareness among the general public, strengthening our partner relations and the broader mission of the AMGA. The Board agreed that, while its support of the Certified Guides Federation is significant and essential, the presence of organizational support of the Access Director position is central in creating a climate where all our members can trust we are taking the initiative to address the pressing concerns of the American guiding profession.



RD Corner

by Betsy Novak

Thanks to the recent support of the Access Director Position proposal by the Board of Directors, the AMGA now has the opportunity to improve our organization and make use of the new position as a competitive tool in retaining members, growing our programs, strengthening our international relations and educating the general public about guide training and certification.

The Access Director will serve as a clearly identified person within the organization responsible for coordinating and providing focused education, outreach and advocacy around the guiding profession to target audiences and for developing policy recommendations, direction and procedures to address issues and problems of local, regional, and national significance.

The Access Director will be responsible for researching current issues on public lands, developing scoping comments and AMGA position statements, and coordinating policy proposals and long-term strategies with industry affiliates to promote, build awareness and generate support for the AMGA training and certification program, credential-based access, and the AMGA in general.

The Access Director will serve as point of contact for the IFMGA, regional representatives, state and federal land managers, the Certified Guides Federation, and other key groups and agency officials in providing information that addresses current and emerging issues, strategic budget planning, and external operations and outreach.

The Access Director will provide regular updates on pertinent issues, trends and news regarding AMGA activities involving outreach and access to AMGA Executive Director, AMGA Membership and IFMGA Executive Committee.

Due to funding limitations the Access Director position will remain part-time throughout 2010, but will most likely be built into the 2011 budget as a full-time position. The AMGA is confident that by hiring an Access Director we will change the face of the organization, build stronger relationships with land managers, policy figures and the public, will gain support for credential-based access and we will be able to develop critical messages and strategies for outreach, focused funding and other activities intended to heighten awareness and support of the guiding profession. If you would like to learn more about the Access Director position please contact the AMGA office.



Finally, winter seems to be making its mark here in Jackson. I had been watching California get pounded by storms as I struggled to miss rocks, but finally things are shaping up the way we like it around here.

Winter and the associated Ski Programs are well underway at the AMGA. Soon, the spring Rock Programs will be running. With the new year, there are a number of changes that are now in effect. I detailed these changes in my last newsletter article, but I am inclined to remind folks of where we stand.

As I detailed in the last newsletter, we will require that all participants embarking on the ski training and certification program take their courses and exams in different locations. In requiring this, we are sensitive to the added strain on participants and the increased financial burden this might cause. With this in mind we are offering a Ski Mountaineering Guides Course in the Coast Mountains around Whistler along with the course also being offered in Valdez. We will run one exam this season with twelve candidates. Twelve candidates are somewhat more than normal, but we were eager to accommodate as many candidates as possible



given the ability to run only one exam. This exam will be run near Girdwood, Alaska to facilitate venue diversity for those having taken a course in Valdez.

As you know, we have modified the climbing standard by which Rock Instructor Course and exam participants will be expected to guide. The prerequisites do require 5.10 skills but we will only test to a 5.9 level on these programs. In looking at the prerequisites, you will notice that the amount of grade IV climbs and 5.10 routes have been increased on the prerequisites for the Rock Guide Course. In the end, you will need the same amount to get on the Rock Guide Course, but now the Grade IV, 5.10 route requirements come between the Rock Instructor Course and Rock Guide Course.

We have had a few questions regarding the terrain guidelines and how they might change with the arrival of the RIC modifications. People have been under the impression that they were only allowed to guide to a certain difficulty level under the terrain guidelines from before. With the changes to the RIC and the expectations regarding route difficulty on the course and exam, there was some concern that this would change the terrain guidelines. In reading the terrain guideline descriptions it is easy to see how one might interpret limitations on route difficulty. The guidelines are meant to state that the route difficulty stated is the minimum standard, not the maximum standard. The limitations come with route length - Rock Instructors are limited to Grade III climbs and straight-forward descents.

Finally, remember that we have eliminated the testing of Aspirant Exam skills on final exams for those participants who took advanced courses before the Aspirant Exam program.

If you have not taken and passed an Aspirant Exam in a particular discipline, you will be required to do so before applying for a final exam in the discipline of interest. Be sure to talk to Henry a minimum of 3-months before the time you might be interested in taking an Aspirant Exam, preferably longer, if you want to have a chance of getting something scheduled. As I already said, you must have completed an Aspirant Exam before applying for a final exam.

Please do not forget that as of the 2011 Alpine Guide course season, you will be required to have taken the ice climbing component, so get on the "stick" and don't get caught with your pants down, sign up and get this course out of the way!

So that's all I have, nothing new, just some friendly reminders. Be careful, be prepared - funky, persistent layers are looming out there, don't get caught!

TRANSITIONING THE CGF TO THE CGC:

by Scott Schell

the Certified Guides Cooperative

Hello and greetings from the Pacific Northwest. For this edition of the AMGA Mountain Bulletin, I'm writing about the exciting changes that are taking place in the Certified Guides Federation (CGF). As many of you are aware, the AMGA Annual Meeting last fall was somewhat of a historic milestone in terms access; the AMGA conducted a second, and highly productive, round table session in which over 75 members of the guiding community came together to share ideas and concerns about access in the US. In addition to the round table, substantial time during the open session of the AMGA BoD meeting was devoted to the CGF and access. The dialogue that came from these meetings sparked a substantial development in the direction of the CGF.

Since last October, many changes have occurred in the proposal set forth by the CGF – the most significant being the shift towards forming a cooperative versus an employee model. Following the meeting, the AMGA voted to create a sub-committee comprised of myself and members of both organizations

to look into the viability of a coop model replacing the existing structure of the CGF. Research and efforts from the CGF and the AMGA-CGF subcommittee show that a transition to a cooperative appears to be the best fit for the Certified Guide and the original mission statement of the CGF. This new organization will be known as the Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC).

First a little background on cooperatives:

At first glance, coops resemble many other types of businesses, but a closer look reveals some distinct differences. The following is from a USDA document titled How to Start a Cooperative:

...differences are found in the cooperative's purpose, ownership, control, and distribution of benefits. Cooperatives follow three principles that define or identify their distinctive characteristics:

- User-owned
- User-controlled
- User-benefited

The model in which the member-guides are owners and control the organization of the

Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC) solves several issues at hand that were faced with previous versions of the CGF. First, the issue of subcontracting is solved; if a guide is an owner of an organization, he/she is not considered a subcontractor. Secondly, as owners of the coop, guides will not be required to pay the high percentage of their gross pay that was previously discussed in the CGF proposal at the fall meeting (there will be a per-trip fee charged of the guide – known in a coop as a per-unit retain – but it will be much less than 32%). Thirdly, member-guides will have a say in how the organization is run. This includes everything from voting for the board of directors to choosing which permits to obtain and so on.

The user-benefited principle states that the cooperative's sole purpose is to provide and distribute benefits to members on the basis of their use. Guides who join the CGC will come together in a cooperative and receive benefits that are otherwise unavailable to the Certified Guide working in the US. These include an affordable liability insurance policy and the permits to work at various locations throughout the country.

As we move forward with our transition towards the coop, we will be following a framework often used in starting cooperatives. Many of these steps still need to be completed, some of which I will need your help and input on – we will be sending a targeted survey to assess the needs and the potential use a Certified Guide will have of the new cooperative.

Please stay tuned for upcoming surveys, emails, and announcements from the CGF as we begin our exciting transition to a cooperative. And please feel free to get in touch me if you have any questions.





PROGRAM DIRECTOR CORNER – HENRY BEYER

Am I Officially Enrolled?

The first thing I want to say is Thank You. Thank you for all the kind words since the birth of my son Jayden. He is doing just great. My wife, Laurie, and I are so grateful for all the warm thoughts coming our way. I also want to say Thank You for your patience and understanding while I frantically try and catch up on all the work that was neglected while I was out of the office at the end of November and through December. Due to the large number of applications submitted during that time, I am processing them based on course or exam date rather than on when I received the application. This will ensure that I get students enrolled on the rapidly approaching spring courses. If you have not heard from me, be assured that I will get to your application. If you have questions you can always call or email me.

This is the first full year that our online database my.amga.com is functional, and with most new things there is an adjustment phase, both for the users and the administrators. I am learning how to best manage the application process now that it is virtually all paperless, and I am sure many of you are learning how to navigate the new system. Over the past few months I have come across a couple of issues that I think are worth addressing. The first issue is the question of

course enrollment, specifically when is student considered officially enrolled on a course or exam; the second issue is the payment of the course deposit which is to a certain extent predicated on the first issue.

The simple answer to the first question, “When is a student considered enrolled on a program?”, is either when your Status on my.amga.com states you are enrolled and/or, more definitively, you receive an official confirmation email from myself stating that you are enrolled. Until either of these occur, you can not assume that you are enrolled, even if you paid a deposit. Which brings me to the second issue.

With the new online system you may pay a deposit when you initially register for a program. This of course saves me from having to track you down and collect a payment later on, but it also seems to give the impression that enrollment is implied. This, as mentioned above, is not the case. It is not necessary to submit payment when you first register for a program, though it is preferred. If you choose to pay the deposit and do not get enrolled in the course or exam you registered for then your entire deposit will be refunded. If you choose not to pay the deposit at the time you register for a course or exam, then you will

not be enrolled until your payment is received even if all the other necessary paperwork has been received.

To clarify, in order to be enrolled in a program, I must have **all** of the following:

- 1 Online program registration: my.amga.com
- 2 Completed resume
- 3 AMGA Health Statement
- 4 Required waivers
- 5 Appropriate medical certification and CPR certification
- 6 Applicable avalanche certifications
- 7 Deposit

If any of the above is missing, then your application will be considered incomplete. Enrollment is only first come first serve to the extent that you submit a complete application. To rephrase, courses and exams will be filled with qualified applicants who submit complete applications, with said applicants being enrolled in the order that their applications are received.

If you have doubts to your enrollment status please visit your member page at my.amga.com or contact me at the AMGA office. I will be glad to answer any questions you may.

That's all for now! Cheers.



It is a marriage in which the knot is tied with excruciating care.

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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BAGGING THE INSURANCE SUMMITS IN 2010

by Don Pachner

Good News About Prices on the Liability Insurance Front

For the second time in the last few years we are hearing rumblings that insurance underwriters will tighten up their underwriting, but liability insurance rates continue to fall by at least 5% on mountaineering guide service renewals so far this year, with no indication that rates will reverse direction anytime soon.

AMGA certifications continue to result in discounted liability insurance rates. When sending in your renewal applications for liability insurance, if you provide a list of your newly earned AMGA certifications over the past year (and those of your guides) you should receive additional credit on your liability insurance renewal rates. When applying for a new insurance policy, AMGA certifications and the AMGA risk management practices picked up in your courses will earn significant discounts, so make sure to list them on the application and in your operations manual.

More Permits Require an Assumption of Risk Form This Year

This year, more government permit administrators are starting to follow a directive from Washington, D.C. recommending use of an Assumption of Risk Form (AORF) by guides as a condition of their special use permit, and at the same time prohibit use of waiver forms when guiding under these permits. Common examples of these parks are Acadia, Denali, North Cascades and Rainier National Parks, and Targhee-Caribou National Forest in the Tetons.

Waiver forms signed by clients are used by mountaineering guides and insurance underwriters to have claims thrown out of court and to reduce expensive litigation on claims without merit. Typically a waiver form has four parts, an assumption of risk, a waiver of the client's right to bring a claim, an indemnification of the guide's claim expenses, and the client's consent to all this.

According to a directive from Washington, D.C., a citizen engaging in recreation in a public park should not be asked to waive their right to sue the government or a guide, for this would be against public policy.

One of the largest underwriters of mountaineering guides' insurance initially refused to abide by this permit requirement until drawn into a lawsuit in Alaska involving a U.S. Forest Service permit. A request to dismiss the lawsuit based on the guide's Waiver Form was denied by the court due to non-compliance with the permit. As a result, the guide's attorneys (hired by the insurance company) were unable to have the case thrown out of court based on either the Waiver Form, or the AORF that the guide did not use.

Consequently, this particular underwriter will now accept use of the AORF where it is required by the terms of a permit; however, you must submit to the insurance underwriter a copy of the permit requirement and a copy of the Assumption of Risk Form you plan on using, and obtain written permission to use the AORF in each case.

No matter which insurance company writes the liability insurance, guides should insist on obtaining written permission from their insurance company each time they enter into a permit requiring an AORF, to avoid legal, permit and insurance issues. You should have the AORF reviewed by your attorney before use. A dual approach of using both an Assumption of Risk Form and a Waiver Form as suggested by some underwriters is not acceptable and would also be in violation of these permits. Otherwise, you may find yourself without any liability insurance coverage when a claim is brought while guiding under the permit. If this seems confusing, ask your insurance agent or broker to explain it... they are insurance professionals who are well versed in these issues.

AMGA Group Insurance Programs

We all have our favorite hidden spots on the mountain, a place where the wonders of the natural world open up before us and we are in awe of nature, places of spiritual renewal that strengthen our souls, our beliefs, and our resolve. We often have to fight to keep these places special... well, the AMGA has some hidden insurance resources that may strike a similar note to an insurance person... hard to believe? I'll admit this is a bit of hyperbole and editorial license; however, the AMGA has spent much time and energy investigating group insurance programs that will benefit its members. Check out the "resources" section of the AMGA web site under "insurance."

The AMGA discounted insurance programs range from ORI AD&D/ Medical Expense Accident Insurance (accidental death benefit and accident medical expense coverage) to ISI Life Insurance* (ever ask your local life insurance agent for a life insurance application for a mountaineering guide?) and ISI Disability Insurance* (reimbursement of lost wages when an injury or illness prevents the guide from guiding) that can be used by the AMGA member and the AMGA member's employees. The AMGA has carefully screened these programs, and taken great care to make these discounted programs available to you as AMGA members. Take this opportunity to explore these programs on the AMGA web site.

*Author Don Pachner helped set up the ISI Life Insurance & Disability Insurance programs for AMGA and receives 2.5% commission from ISI on new policies written through the program



Climbing Instructor Program Director Are You Really Who You Say You Are?

by Ed Crothers

Marketing for a small business or individual guide is a challenge. Creating text that accurately portrays the services that are offered and what sets a business apart from the competition is an art form. Hiring, even consulting, with a professional marketing agency is often prohibitively expensive. Marketing budgets tend to be small for most small enterprises and it is always a challenge deciding where those limited funds are best invested. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, a very powerful and inexpensive marketing tool became available to anyone with a computer and the skill to create a website. These days websites have become the primary marketing tool for many guides and guide service owners. Facebook and Twitter are also becoming effective marketing mediums. These tools make it possible for anyone to do their own marketing. While these resources are convenient and economical ways to reach prospective clients, there are hidden dangers.

As Accreditation Director I look at a lot of websites. Certainly those of programs going through the accreditation process, but I also like to see how other people in our business are portraying themselves and selling their services. The quality of these sites runs the gamut, from obvious amateur efforts to very slick productions. One thing that they all have in common is the attempt to set their product apart from the competition. This is where the danger lies for the unwary. The problem arises when "harmless" boasting or aggrandizement turns into promises that cannot be kept, products that cannot be delivered or are blatantly false. The line between accurate and inaccurate information is often subtle and easy to unintentionally cross.

Here are some examples:

- "Our guides are the best in the business."
- "Your safety is our number one priority."
"We are proud of our perfect safety record."
- "We have a 100% success rate on Mount..."
- "We can guide you anywhere in the U.S."
- "All our guides are certified." Or using the logo of an educational or certifying organization in a way that could imply that all the

guides employed by a business have been trained and/or certified by said organization.

Due to limited space, it is not possible to explore the problems with each of these statements in depth. Also, these examples are only a sampling of potential pitfalls. Hopefully, many of the problems with these claims are obvious to the reader. Less obvious is that some of these statements are exceedingly vague and open to a variety of interpretations. Should a lawsuit arise as a result of using this type of language, it will likely not matter what the seller says they meant to say as much as how a reasonable consumer (read: judge and/or jury) would interpret the claim or promise.

An important concept to be aware of is that the marketing materials used to entice a person to purchase services are a part of the contractual agreement the buyer and seller enter into. Claims made in these materials become an integral part of the contractual agreement. Problems arise when a client decides to sue because they feel they did not receive the advertised product or service. Failure to deliver what was promised could result in claims of breach of contract, fraud or misrepresentation. This situation can become much more insidious when the suit involves death or serious injury to a client. Some state courts have ruled that "fraudulent inducement" invalidates any other agreements the buyer and seller have entered into. Meaning, among other things, the liability waiver or acknowledge of risk form the client signed is null and void. Suddenly the nightmare gets considerably worse.

There are ways to avoid these problems. At the top of the list is "tell the truth." Honestly portray the services being offered, the people providing the services, and the hazards associated with the activity. A bit of self aggrandizement is fine provided it can be backed up by facts, not opinion.

Find balance between portraying risk and reward. Clearly, marketing materials should not frighten off perspective clients, but it is

continued on page 18

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The IFMGA is Coming to Boulder, Colorado

by Josh Harrod



For one week in November, Mountain Guides from around the world will descend on Boulder, Colorado as the AMGA plays host to the 2010 IFMGA Fall Meeting.

An idea conceived in Matsumoto, Japan back in 2007 is finally coming of age and we're working hard to put on a memorable event. At our January Board of Directors meeting, Kyle Lefkoff summed it up best – "You're Bar Mitzvah only happens once, so it better be good". So, in a sense, this is the AMGA's Bar Mitzvah and we intend to make it a good one.

The IFMGA Meeting will coincide with the AMGA Annual Meeting, and we're counting on our Membership to attend and take part in this once in a lifetime opportunity. While a few of the events are reserved solely for the international delegates, there are several others open to everyone. Our goal is to provide ample opportunity for our guides to interact with our guests from abroad. We will be hosting our usual Opening Night and Main Events complete with product giveaways, eating, drinking, raffle, silent

auction and more. Sandwiched in between will be climbing days, a Guide's Parade, a movie and/or guest speaker presentations to name a few.

We have created a blog just for the event – www.ifmga2010.com – and will be updating it as things progress. We'd like for anyone planning on attending to register, so we can plan accordingly. Just select the "registration" tab and complete the form. Registration is absolutely free. We've listed some recommended lodging options and are working on securing a host hotel for the event. Regardless of where you choose to sleep, we suggest you take care of it sooner rather than later. The event falls on the same weekend as a CU home football game so you will be fighting for space with slew of rabid Iowa State Cyclones fans. We have secured group pricing at the Hotel Boulderado. The rates and booking information can be found at www.ifmga2010.com/?page_id67.

To guarantee the success of the events we've reached out to our Corporate Partners and the response has been amazing. To date we've signed on The North Face as the Conference Sponsor; Black Diamond and Patagonia as Moab Climbing Trip Co-sponsors; Outdoor Research and Petzl as Opening Night Co-sponsors; Five Ten, Marmot, Osprey and W.L. Gore as Presenting Sponsors; Arc'teryx, Brooks-Range, Mammut, Mountain Hardwear and Prana as Supporting Sponsors.

We are working hard to finalize the schedule of events along with securing locations. Below is a tentative schedule that will be updated at www.ifmga2010.com as things are finalized.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone in November. Cheers, Josh



NOVEMBER 8TH-12TH

Moab Climbing Trip

Register at www.ifmga2010.com

Presented by Black Diamond & Patagonia

Hosted by Jackson Hole Mountain Guides

\$675 per person

NOVEMBER 12TH

Opening Night Event

Presented by Outdoor Research & Petzl

Boulder Prana Store

NOVEMBER 13TH

Technical Commission Meeting

Closed to the Public

7:30am-3:30pm • Rembrandt Yard

Informal Climbing

10:00am-4:00pm • Eldo/Boulder Canyon

Casual Dinner – Invite Only

6:00pm • Location TBD

Slideshow/Movie

8:00pm • Location TBD

NOVEMBER 14TH

General Assembly – Closed to the Public

7:30am-3:30pm • Rembrandt Yard

Informal Climbing

10:00am-4:00pm • Eldo/Boulder Canyon

Guides Parade

4:30pm • Pearl Street Mall

Delegates Dinner – Invite Only

6:00pm • Q's

NOVEMBER 15TH

Breakfast

Presented by The North Face

8:00am • The North Face Store

Climbing Day

Presented by The North Face

10:00am-4:00pm • Eldo/Boulder Canyon

The Main Event

Presented by The North Face

6:00pm • Rembrandt Yard

ROCK STANDARDS

by Henry Beyer, Program Director, American Mountain Guides Association

In the previous *Mountain Bulletin* the Technical Director and I wrote extensively on changes to the Rock Discipline. More specifically we addressed modifications to the prerequisites for both the Rock Instructor Course (RIC) and Rock Instructor Exam (RIE). Since then we have received inquiries regarding how AMGA Certified Rock Instructors certified prior to the changes will be distinguished from those yet to be certified. The Technical Committee along with the Board of Directors thought about this very question a great deal while deliberating on modifying the requirements for the Rock Instructor Course and Rock Instructor Exam. The perception that the rock instructor certification would be devalued is one of the reasons it took almost two years for the modifications to be adopted. In the end it was decided that the benefits would outweigh the costs.

The simple answer is that no differentiation will be made. All AMGA Certified Rock Instructors will use the same logo and will need to follow the current guidelines set by the terrain description for Certified Rock Instructors. The primary reason for this is that the terrain guidelines for an AMGA Certified Rock Instructor will remain the same as they are now (to view the current terrain guidelines please go to <http://hireaguide.amga.com/rockinstructor>). The 5.9 climbing standard that is now required for both the Rock Instructor Course and the Rock Instructor Exam is the minimum standard that needs to be passed in order to obtain certification. It is not the maximum standard. An AMGA Certified Rock Instructor who can safely lead at a higher standard with clients is permitted to do so, so long as he or she remains on climbs that are Yosemite Decimal System Grade III or easier and do not exceed the following terrain description: *Approaches and descents are generally straightforward, climbs are not in a remote setting, routes are generally short and do not involve snow, glaciated terrain or significant short roping in either the approach, the climb or the descent.*

Remember that the guidelines set forth by the terrain descriptions for AMGA Certified Rock Instructors must be followed, “when certification is an integral part of, or basis for, obtaining a permit to guide...”

The primary benefit that is anticipated from this change is more individuals seeking rock instructor certification because the perceived glass ceiling of the 5.10a movement standard has been removed. (In reality anyone seeking to become a Certified Rock Instructor must still recreationally climb at the 5.10a level.) Furthermore, the elimination of the Grade IV requirements removes the added burden of extensive travel for those individuals who do not have access to Grade IV climbs in their geographic region - namely climbing guides and instructors who reside along the eastern seaboard. Both New England and the southeast have strong enclaves of guides who may now take advantage of AMGA certification without having to travel two thirds of the way across the country to complete the prerequisites to become a Certified Rock Instructor.

Why does the AMGA want to see more Certified Rock Instructors? Because the rock instructor certification is meant to meet the needs of outdoor professionals who sit somewhere between the SPI community and the rock guide community. Many of these professionals work at universities or

organizations, like NOLS and Outward Bound, where the rock guide certification is often unnecessary and the SPI certification doesn't quite meet their needs. In its previous incarnation the rock instructor certification was too close to the rock guide certification and this becomes evident with a closer look at the total number of certifications held by members. Currently there are roughly 550 members who hold a SPI certification, 95 who hold a rock instructor certification, and 200 who hold a rock guide certification. These numbers should be more linear if the certifications represent a continuum of guide training and ability.

It is important to remember that all organizations must adapt to their environment in order to remain relevant and viable, or risk becoming irrelevant. However, when doing so they should remain true to their core values. The AMGA's mission statement states that The American Mountain Guide's Association (AMGA) is the premier source for training, credentials, and services for professional mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States. The modifications made to the rock instructor certification do not change that. In fact, the changes have most likely made the AMGA more inclusive of the professional climbing instructor population. This does not mean that the AMGA does not recognize the time, effort and money that current certified rock instructors put into



gaining certification, nor is the AMGA trying to devalue their certification. It merely means that the AMGA is looking to the future and taking necessary steps to provide the services and training that will be needed.

I would like to close highlighting the modifications that occurred, and reminding all Certified Rock Instructors who received certification before 12/31/09 and who wish to take the next step towards rock guide certification that the AMGA is offering a discount on either the Rock Guide Course/Aspirant Exam or Rock Guide Exam.

The previous prerequisites for the Rock Instructor Course (RIC):

- 50 different multi-pitch traditional routes
- 5 of these routes must be at least Grade III
- 4 of these routes must be at least Grade IV 10 of these routes must be at least 5.10a

The current prerequisites for the RIC:

- 50 different multi-pitch traditional routes
- 10 of these routes must be at least Grade III
- 10 of these routes must be at least 5.10a

Although the Grade IV requirement was eliminated, the current prerequisites actually require one more Grade III or greater climb than the previous prerequisites.

The previous prerequisites for the Rock Instructor Exam (RIE):

- Since completing the RIC you have led or shared lead on at least 7 routes Grade III.
- Since completing the RIC you have led or shared lead on at least 3 routes Grade IV.
- Since completing the RIC you have led 10 different traditional routes rated 5.10a or harder.

The current prerequisites for the RIE:

- Since completing the RIC you have guided/mock guided at least 10 routes Grade III or harder.
- Since completing the RIC you have led 10 different traditional routes rated 5.10a or harder.

The key difference here is that current prerequisites require students to have guided or mock guided while the previous prerequisites only required shared leading.

Overall the AMGA feels that the differences are not great and that the changes will serve a greater population of outdoor professionals.



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GEAR review



Backcountry Access Tracker 2 Avalanche Transceiver

by Ed Crothers

The long awaited BCA Tracker 2 has made it to the marketplace. I was lucky enough to get one from the first production run for some testing. In the interest of full disclosure I need to point out some of my biases. Call me cynical, but I don't believe that recreational backcountry users practice their avalanche rescue skills (search, probe, shovel) often enough. The more features a transceiver has, the more time a user needs to spend reading the owner's manual and getting a thorough understanding of how those feature affect the beacon, especially in "search" mode. Digital transceivers are only "intuitive" up to a point; meaning some instruction and practice is required. Three antenna transceivers are the bomb. For most transceiver users, simple is good. These biases do influence this review.

Some key differences between the Tracker DTS and the Tracker 2 are obvious at first glance. The Tracker 2 is noticeably smaller than its' predecessor. Despite the addition of a third antenna, it is 2 ozs. lighter. It has an ergonomic shape that makes it easier to hold, even with heavy gloves on. The red search/transmit button has been replaced by a tab at the bottom of the device that is pulled out to activate search mode. In my opinion, very nice improvements.

Two of the biggest improvements are less obvious: addition of a third antenna and increased range. With the third antenna, "nulls" and "spikes" during the fine search have been eliminated. It also greatly improves the accuracy when dealing with deep burials (2 meters or greater.) In 8 scenarios I was able to hit a target buried 2 meters within 1 or 2 probes. The range is nearly double that of

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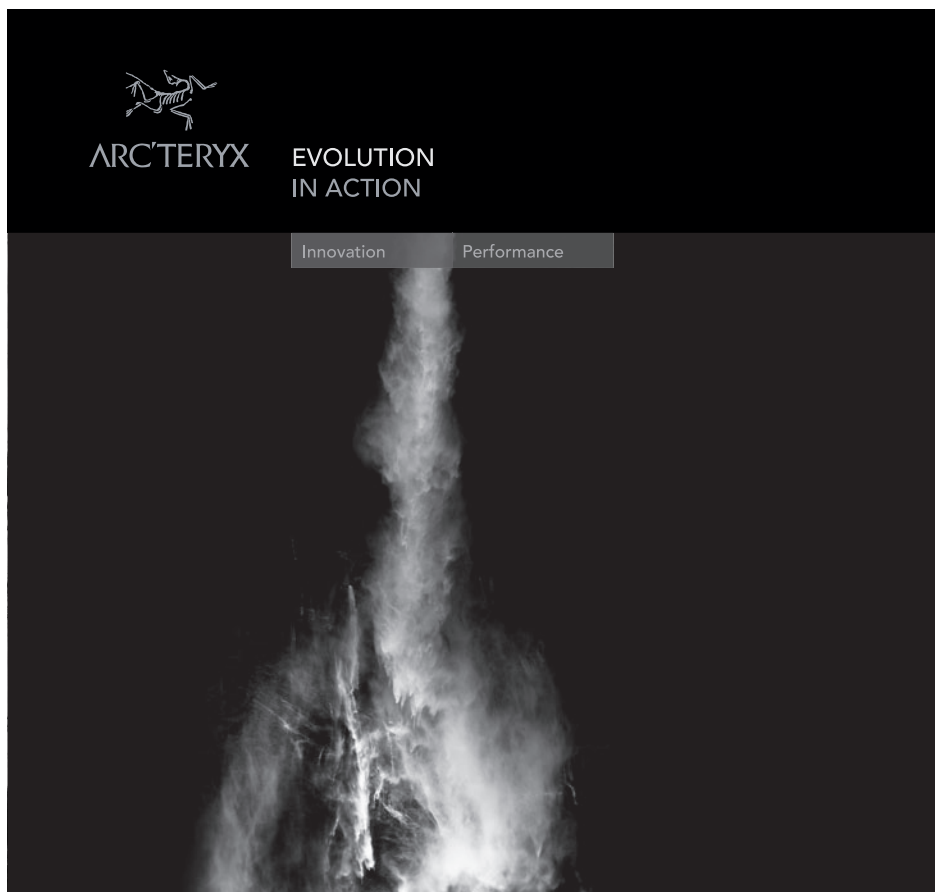
the Tracker DTS. Consistently the Tracker 2 would pick up an initial signal at approximately 56 meters and lock on to a flux line at approximately 43 meters. This performance matches and, in some cases, exceeds the range of other 3 antenna transceivers on the market.

As to other features, BCA continued to employ the “keep it simple” philosophy with this transceiver. There are few bells and whistles. Most notably, it lacks the ability to block the signal of transmitting transceivers during multiple burial searches. This is a conscious choice on the part of BCA. Based on their research of avalanche incident data, they work from the assumption that true complex multiple burials requiring special search techniques are a rare occurrence. They also found that these complex situations tend to involve larger, guided parties. As a result of their findings they have chosen a simple design that they feel will meet the needs of the majority of transceiver users. This approach also allows BCA to keep the price down; models having the marking/blocking feature retail in the \$450 to \$500 range. The Tracker 2 retails for \$335.

Despite BCA’s philosophical approach to transceiver design, the Tracker 2 does have a couple features that can be useful when dealing with multiple burials. Like the Tracker DTS, the Tracker 2 has the SP (special mode) feature that can be helpful in the hands of a very experienced user to aid in multiple burial scenarios. Also, there is a red light that goes on when the transceiver picks up multiple signals and will blink if the buried transmitting transceivers are in close proximity.

There is a “return to transmit” feature, but in the default mode it is not engaged. If the user prefers to use this feature, it must be turned on manually. When this feature is engaged, the transceiver will switch to transmit after it has been in search mode for 5 minutes. A new feature is an audible warning that will sound for a full 30 seconds before the transceiver switches from search to transmit. Also, if the user fails to keep the transceiver in search mode and it returns to transmit, a different audio signal will sound until the user addresses the situation. These signals make it highly unlikely that a rescuer would be unaware that their beacon was no longer in search mode, provided they understand what the audio signal is telling them. It is important to be aware that every time the beacon is turned off, the “return to transmit” feature is disengaged. I think the owner’s manual could do a better job of explaining this.

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Mammut Pulse Barryvox

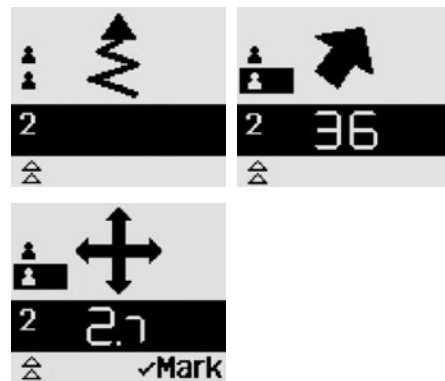
by Vince Anderson

Mammut's Pulse Barryvox with its new 3.0 firmware update marks a huge step forward for avalanche transceivers for mountain guides. With the new firmware update, this already great beacon just got even better! It combines the sophistication of a three-antenna transceiver like the Ortovox S1 with the simplicity and ease of use of a transceiver like the BCA Tracker. It also has a host of features that neither of these (nor any other) transceivers currently has available. It is this split personality that makes it a good transceiver for either the guide or the client. While certainly not perfect, it is one of the better avalanche transceivers currently available for professional and recreational use.

When turning on the unit for the first time, or after changing batteries, it will prompt you to go through an initial setup process. This process is easy to follow, calibrates the unit's internal compass, and allows personalization of the unit with respect to entering personal ID data and choosing the user mode (Basic or Advanced) and, in the case of Advanced, further customization of various search related features (i.e. sounds, analog mode, revert to send time, etc.)

The Pulse Barryvox has two modes of use - Basic and Advanced - which are self explanatory in terms of which user group each mode is intended for. In the default, Basic mode, the transceiver will work much like a Tracker in that it is very intuitive to use, requiring a minimum of explanation and training to understand: it's fairly idiot proof in this respect and great for clients and others with less experience and practice

using avalanche transceivers. It has a button at the top with three positions: Off, Send and Search. The back of the unit has simple yet effective instructions of how to proceed with a search when in the Search mode. The display simply tells the user what to do and where to go. In the case of multiple burials (a truly grim and hopefully avoidable situation), the unit alerts the user as to how many signals it knows are out there (i.e. how many it can pick up). It is with multiple burial searching that this unit seems to really stand out for the novice user. By default, it will send the user on a search for the closest buried by isolating that signal only. Once pinpointed (hopefully, with a probe), the user can then "mark" this victim by pressing a button on the side of the unit, after which the unit will prompt the user in the direction of the next closest known burial. Teaching a few avalanche courses this winter to over 50 members of the US armed forces that had little or no experience with avalanche transceivers, I noticed that multi-burial search times were significantly reduced using this transceiver than with any of the others available (standard Barryvox and Tracker 2).



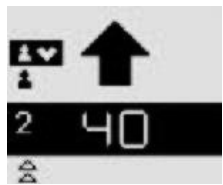
When searching the unit will initially display the classic "zigzag" symbol when it has yet to receive a signal telling you to proceed with a "signal" search of the avalanche area until it begins picking up a signal. Once it has, it then shows an arrow and number like other two-antenna (digital) transceivers do. It also shows a number in the bottom of the screen indicating how many are buried and a numbered list of little people symbols highlighting the current victim being searched for. In the Advanced mode, the user can actually scroll through this list and choose which one to look for (i.e. not necessarily the closest). The internal compass does a great job keeping the directional arrow somewhat stable. Unlike other beacons, it will also tell you if you need to go backwards, though this is usually obvious, as the numbers get bigger. Once in close proximity

to the buried (less than 3 meters) the display switches from a directional arrow to an image of a cross. This is to indicate that it is time to begin searching in Bracketing mode. As with other transceivers, it is important to maintain a consistent orientation of the unit while bracketing. It really guides the user through the search prompting you what to do and when to do it. Like many other units, the Pulse Barryvox will auto-revert to "Send" mode after a while of searching in case another avalanche comes down and buries the search party (how often does that happen?) Unlike most other transceivers, the Pulse Barryvox will not auto-revert if "active" searching is taking place (i.e. movement). This is a cool function as that auto-revert function usually confuses people, especially novice searchers. In the Advanced Mode, you can choose between 4 minutes, 8 minutes or even never to auto-revert.

There are two buttons on the side of the unit, which allow the user to select the various options on the screen. While in the Basic mode, either button works for most all selections. In the Advanced mode, you will use a different button for different options. One of the nice things about the Basic mode is that it really is "basic." The Advanced mode, on the other hand, is quite sophisticated and requires a much higher experience level with transceiver use AND ability to read and follow the instructional manual. The advanced features are great: ability to triage the search (more on that later), switch between analog and digital mode, choice of audio support or plain analog audio signal, length of time to auto-revert to Send mode, and much more. Setting up and understanding how to use and customize these modes takes some patience as reading the manual, though not too confusing, is not exactly straightforward. You can enter your name and other personal information in the initial set-up, if you like; not bad if you have several different units for different uses (i.e. for clients, other guides, etc.) Naming waypoints on your Garmin is easy compared to entering your name and other personal information on the Pulse Barryvox with its two buttons.

Another interesting feature of the Pulse Barryvox, and the reason for its name, is that it can transmit Vital Data to other Pulse Barryvox units indicating whether or not it detects small movements of a buried victim (a pulse) and, hence, whether or not they are likely to still be alive. Assuming all or most of the party is using the Pulse Barryvox, this may allow the search party to triage the search in the event of a multiple burial by

choosing to search first for victims that still have a viable chance of survival as indicated by the unit. The buried victims that do (have a detectible pulse) will be indicated on the screen with a "heart" symbol. This sounds pretty cool and maybe even too good to be true. Well, like all things that do, there are some caveats with this. First off, this function only works if you use the handy (bulky, awkward to adjust and heavy) harness system that the unit comes with. I'm of the "carry the transceiver in my front pocket" school, (which, by the way is described as a valid option for carrying in the manual) for simplicity's sake. If you choose to carry your Pulse Barryvox in this fashion, then your "Vital Data" will not be transmitted to other Pulse Barryvox units searching for you. In other words, your little person symbol will not show up on the screen with little "heart" symbol next to it and you might get triaged towards the bottom of the list. I guess you better hope you have your Avalung in mouth if you choose to carry your beacon in your pocket. Of course, you could also just carry it in the harness, cumbersome as it may be. Also, I attempted to test this function a bit during my recent courses and there were some instances where our live "victims" did NOT appear as live victims on the searching unit's screen. Maybe when entombed in real, hard avalanche debris, this will work differently, but I did not have the opportunity to find out.



It will also record the amount of time that a victim has been buried by starting a timer each time unit is motionless for a little while. This could be handy when you dig someone up to immediately see how long they've been buried under the snow. Another issue with the Vital Data transmission is traveling to other countries. The transmission of the Vital Data is done so via another radio frequency (NOT 457 kHz) to other similarly equipped transceivers (Pulse Barryvox). The radio frequency used for this in North America is different than that used in Europe. If you purchased your Pulse Barryvox in the States and are planning on using it in Europe (sound like you?) then, you need to send it in to a service center to have it enabled to send and receive the Vital Data information in regions outside North America. Inconvenient is an understatement here.

A few other issues of concern come up with it as well. The button that switches between Off, Send and Search at the top is prone to easily switching between modes with moderate bumping. Mostly, it is likely to get bumped from Off to Send. Not a big deal, but I noticed that mine had done this in my pack a few days later before going on a tour

and the batteries, though not dead yet, were significantly drained. In a one instance during a course, we had a transceiver buried in a pack for search practices get bumped from Send to Search. This would be a real "deal-breaker" for any potential avalanche victim. This happened only once but if you try, it's not too hard to do it by bumping the top of the unit. It does seem that when carried in the harness, AS IS RECOMMENDED, this is much less likely to happen since the button is protected some. Maybe I'll have to start carrying mine in the handy pouch/harness and get over my hatred of these bulky, cumbersome, awkward to adjust and noisome things.

In spite of its few shortcomings, this transceiver really rocks! It is a great tool for guides in that it can be customized to for the more advanced functions required by a professional, while still having an easy to use mode for clients and other novice users. Its unique ability to transmit vital data to other users of the same unit is also something that may prove quite useful in truly catastrophic multiple burial situations. The three-antenna design and internal compass really work to stabilize the search directional arrows, quickening the time it takes to begin the fine search.

Highly recommended!

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NOVEMBER | The AMGA Board holds a conference call to review the task list presented by the CGF. In general the Board charges the committee to continue its work, and to create a proposed business plan for the cooperative model. The Board sets a timeline of March 1, 2010, for the completion of the business plan.

2010 – THE FORMULATION OF THE FUTURE PLAN

JANUARY | AMGA Board approves funds for the creation of an Access Director in the AMGA office. *Please see the ED Corner in this newsletter for full details on this position.*

JANUARY | The AMGA-CGF committee reports to the AMGA Board as follows:

The cooperative model is very promising as a solution for the CGF because it meets many of the needed criteria with land managers, insurance, potential members, tax status, and international reciprocity. *Please see the CGF Update in this bulletin for details.*

JANUARY | CGF asks the AMGA for \$6,000 to carry the organization thru until it can finalize the Certified Guides Cooperative plan. AMGA BOD agrees to issue \$3,000 immediately, and another \$3,000 after the CGF/CGC raises \$6,000 to match the AMGA contribution.

FEBRUARY | AMGA issues \$3,000 to Certified Guides Federation (as voted on by the AMGA Board at January 2010 meeting)

MARCH | AMGA will hire an Access Director to work more closely on short and long-term access issues for the American Guide.

important that clients are informed of the hazards associated with the activities they will be engaged in. The first time they are made aware of the risks involved should not be the morning they arrive for a class or climb and are filling out a liability waiver or acknowledgement form.

If using logos to portray a level of training or certification, take care to use them appropriately. In the case of the AMGA logo, be aware of the current logo use policy and adhere to the guidelines. This is true for any logo use. If in doubt, contact the business or organization involved to see what the rules are for the use of the logo.

Run marketing materials and ideas past an attorney who specializes in outdoor recreation law. There are complex legal issues associated with marketing and consumer protection. Furthermore, consumer protection laws vary from state to state. Work with a professional to get the best advice. I am not a lawyer and nothing I have presented here should be considered legal advice. This is intended to be an educational piece to raise the awareness of AMGA members to issues associated with marketing materials.

The direction lights on the Tracker 2 turn off when the searching transceiver is within 2 meters of the transmitting beacon. In my mind, this is big improvement over the DTS, but why 2 meters? Other models that have this feature turn the lights off at 3 meters, which is also the recommended distance to begin the fine search. The only time I had an issue with this was when I was dealing with deeper burials. While bracketing, the direction lights would turn on and off erratically. While I understood what was going on, my concern is for the inexperienced user dealing with an already difficult situation; seems these lights could add to the stress and confusion.

The harness is easy to put on, adjust, and is light and comfortable. I found putting the transceiver back in the harness one-handed, when it is buried under multiple layers of clothes and while wearing gloves, was reasonably easy; better than some, not as easy as others.

In conclusion, I have to say I am impressed with this transceiver. While I can see how some professionals and gear geeks would like to have some of the added features found on other models, this is a superb choice for recreational users - simple, user friendly, effective. This no nonsense tool is a worthy competitor among the lineup of three antenna transceiver currently on the market.

27 meters straight ahead.
Any questions?

Now's not the time to wish you'd read the manual.
Clear distance and direction. Fast processing.
No questions. No bull.

Ease-of-use and proven reliability make the Tracker DTS the most widely used avalanche beacon in North America.

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