

# Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

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Vol. XXIV No. 2 Spring 2005



### In Memoriam: Philip James Ratz

American Mountain Guides Association director Philip James (Jim) Ratz, age 52, died in a climbing accident in Sinks Canyon May 4, 2005. A memorial service was held Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at the warming hut in Sinks Canyon, Lander, Wyoming.

Jim was born June 14, 1952 in St. Louis, Missouri, and was raised in Kirkwood, Missouri. He attended Kirkwood High School, the University of Wyoming 1970-1971, and graduated from the University of Missouri in 1974 with a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. Jim married Gladys Lantien Chu (from Albany, New York) on June 28, 1986. Jim and Lantien have two children, Willy (12) and Mei (16). Jim filled his life with close friends and family.

He was a co-owner of Jackson Hole Mountain Guides (JHMG) and an avid climber. While he was passionate about preserving time with his family, Jim loved sunny afternoons climbing with his friends in Sinks Canyon where he made numerous first ascents. Jim's work and love for the mountains took him with frequency into the Tetons and Wind Rivers and occasionally to more distant peaks including Denali, Aconcagua, and Kilimanjaro.

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## PRESIDENT CORNER

"We have come a long way towards the unification of the American guiding community!"

## TECHNICAL DIRECTOR CORNER

"More and more guides are seeing the value of AMGA education and thus involving themselves in the training and certification process."

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

"The AMGA is at a critical juncture in time. We have the opportunity to become a powerful national organization, or simply a small club of highly skilled individuals."

### A Call to Expand Our Community by Mike Alkaitis

Life throws us all challenges. Often, we are viewed on how we face and react to those challenges. I am challenging you to grow as a climber, skier, guide, or all of them. Each individual views the world in a unique and different way. Community is a venue to share these views with your peers.



The mountain guiding and climbing community in the United States differs in many ways from our European counterparts. What are these differences? Are they as great as we sometimes perceive? One of the great feelings I have living in Boulder is the close sense of community around me. If it is simply going to a climbing movie at the Boulder Theater, meeting friends and family for an evening bouldering session up at Flagstaff, skiing a peak in the spring, or climbing the Diamond in Rocky Mountain

National Park with a good friend, there is no better feeling. The sense of community support, and verification of the things we love about the outdoors can not be beat.

When I have traveled to Europe this feeling of community is transferred, or comes along

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The **Mountain Bulletin** is published in May, August, November and February.

### Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Deadline for all submissions, including advertising is July 15, 2005.

Deadlines for 2005 issues are as follows:

January 21 (Winter Issue)

April 29 (Spring Issue)

July 16 (Summer Issue)

November 4 (Fall Issue)

### Newsletter Contributors:

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

Simon Fryer is the Program Director for the AMGA.

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.

Dick Jackson is a UIAGM/IFMGA guide and current president of the AMGA.

Nancy Lea is the Membership Director of the AMGA. Prior to working with the AMGA Nancy served as Program Director for City Cliffs, a non-profit organization dedicated to working with underprivileged youth.

Adam Fox is the TRSM Discipline Coordinator, and an AMGA Certified Rock Guide. He is also owner of Fox Mountain Guides, located in Hendersonville, NC.

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Membership Director: Nancy Lea

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### Read this Disclaimer!

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



## Executive Director Corner

by Michael Alkaitis, AMGA Executive Director

Spring is in the air and the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) is in the midst of another busy season. The spring programs are up and running, the latest Application Review Date (ARD) for the fall courses has just passed, the office continues to gather information on liability insurance, the formation of a non profit that would hold permits for certified guides, the new 2006 course structure and curriculum is being implemented, and the annual meeting will be held this fall at Brevard College in North Carolina. With all of these great challenges facing the Association, what are the next steps we must take?

As the AMGA programs grow, we are responsible for providing the open opportunity for everyone qualified to enroll in a program. The AMGA is currently seeking qualified applicants to join our instructor pool. Please find the information below:

- Applications will be accepted three times a year. Deadlines for application submission will be June 30<sup>th</sup>, October 31<sup>st</sup>, and February 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Applications will be sent to the Technical Director at PO Box 1739 Boulder CO 80306 or e-mail [info@amga.com](mailto:info@amga.com).
- The Technical Director, Discipline Coordinator and 2 members of the instructor pool will review applications.

To be considered applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Top-level certification in the desired discipline at minimum. Multiple or IFMGA certification is preferable.
2. A minimum of two years practical experience after certification in the respective discipline required before an application to the instructor/examiner pool will be entertained. \*The review committee may waive this in exceptional cases.
3. Two letters of recommendation from current or past members of the instructor pool.
4. Resume showing extensive personal and guiding experience in a variety of areas and locations.
5. Excellent teaching skills.
6. Based on the information listed, acceptance or rejection of application will be made.

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## The President's Corner

by Dick Jackson, AMGA President

As the AMGA moves towards accomplishing its Long Range Plan (see page 13), I can reflect on the long road taken to arrive at this point. As I referenced in the last newsletter, last fall's 25th Annual Meeting in Moab represented a turning point in the maturity of the AMGA. We have come a long way towards the unification of the American guiding community! But as we all know, it's the "journey" that really counts. All the work from so many Board members, AMGA instructors and examiners, the Executive Director and his office staff, and countless volunteer efforts have set the stage for substantially increasing the value of membership. Looking ahead toward and beyond the year 2006, the AMGA's guide training and certification program is poised to both link Accreditation to Certification and offer future outreach courses and exams that will ultimately launch our association to the growth potential it both desires and deserves.

This is also the time of year to consider the nominations of new Board members for the upcoming fall election. As I prepare to pass the baton to whomever becomes the new president of the AMGA, I am extremely encouraged by the cooperative trend and committee productivity in the recent years. Along with our peers, as mountain guides, who have represented the membership on the Board of Directors, I want to acknowledge and thank the Advisory members of the Board for their authentic commitment, without which we would be far short of the current status on all fronts. Pete Takeda has joined Kyle Lefkoff and Boots Ferguson as one of the non-guiding big-hitters who have accomplished so much for the AMGA over the past few years. Both from the Public Policy and Financial committees, the AMGA is gaining momentum and accountability. Marketing the AMGA brand is yet another priority that will help all of you as a professional mountain guide. I personally thank them for going beyond the call of duty! We should all be grateful for their active participation, and I'll always savor the opportunity to grant credit where credit is due.

Another huge factor in the progress made towards membership benefits has been the Industry support from Outdoor Retailer's equipment suppliers. In terms of sponsored scholarships, pro-purchase programs and AMGA contributions, the industry support has truly made a difference! Many thanks go to Mike Alkaitis for maintaining these relationships and for making these opportunities available.

I wish you all the success for a safe and productive summer guiding and climbing season.... we'll see you in North Carolina this fall! By the way, thank you for the support and continued involvement with the AMGA... this is your association and it shows!

Namaste and Swagatam...  
Dick Jackson



(continued from page 1) - Jim Ratz

Before JHMG, Jim was employed by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) as an instructor from 1973-1978, Alaska Director from 1979-1983 and Executive Director from 1984-1995. Under Jim's leadership, NOLS grew in both size and scope; he opened the Patagonia, Southwest and Canada programs and published *Soft Paths*, the authoritative book on minimum impact backcountry travel. Jim was also instrumental in starting NOLS Leave No Trace, research and public policy programs, the program for local outdoor educators in Kenya, as well as scouting for NOLS India. Jim also led the way as NOLS established relationships with its graduates around the globe. Alumni reunions reconnected graduates and paved the way for development efforts to support the school's scholarship and facility needs.



Near the end of Jim's service to NOLS he joined then chief mountaineering instructor Phil Powers to lead a successful NOLS Denali Expedition, a trip on which their friendship and interest in working together grew. In 1999 Jim joined Powers and Rob and Kathryn Hess in purchasing Jackson Hole Mountain Guides. Jim was the obvious choice as president of the new corporation. Under his leadership the business grew, opening offices in Moab, Utah and Cody, Wyoming, in addition to its main offices in Jackson and Las Vegas. Along with his office responsibilities, Jim took clients into the mountains. Guides and clients were extremely fond of Jim as an employer, mountain guide and friend.

He served as a Director of the American Mountain Guides Association, beginning in 2000 and serving as the board's Vice President since 2002

Jim was very active in civic leadership and involved in many organizations. He was instrumental in the Lander swimming club and teams. He devoted himself to the Lander Valley High School swim team, was Director of the Lander Swim Club Board, an official of USA Swimming, and on the Board of Review for Wyoming Swimming Inc. Other organizations he was involved with include: Chairman of Leave No Trace, Inc; Advisory Board of the World Wilderness Congress; Rotary International; American Alpine Club; Natural Resource Council; Association for Experiential Education; National Speleological Society; Advisory Board of the Rawlins District Bureau of Land Management; recipient of the first National Partnership Award from the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management; member of the Wilderness Working Group of the Society of American Foresters; Founder, NOLS 1994 Wilderness Risk Management Committee and Conference; Founder, NOLS Wilderness Medicine Symposium 1986; Founder NOLS Wilderness Education and Leadership Symposium 1985; and Co-founder NOLS Wilderness Research Colloquium; he was also an Eagle Scout.

While Jim dedicated his life to outdoor education and the preservation of wilderness, he was above all devoted to his wife and children.

Friends of the family have organized a memorial fund as a college fund or any other need for Jim and Lantien's children, Mei and Willy. Donations, in lieu of flowers, may be sent to The Jim Ratz Memorial Fund at the Wyoming Employees Federal Credit Union in Lander, Wyoming.

(continued from page 1) - A Call to Expand...

with me. I have met great friends and people who have given me the inside scoop on where to stay, climb, ski, eat, and drink. The common bond between us is our love of the mountains. I believe this strong sense of mountain community enables people to grow as people as well as climbers and skiers.

The AMGA is a great place to start this national community of mountain adventurers. At the past annual meeting in Moab, UT I had the sense the AMGA had finally arrived at its intent. To bring mountain guides of all ages together from across the country (we even had a few European guests) to celebrate the outdoors and the profession we love. It was incredible to see certified guides teaching clinics to everyone from a new guide to the veteran IFMGA guide. The Guides Olympics was a time to let down our guard and enjoy the challenges put forth by Craig Luebben, Joe Vallone, Keith Garvey, and Kevin Lorda. These events allow us to invite everyone to participate and to meet fellow guides in an incredible environment.

I ask all of you to continue this movement of inclusiveness and to reach out to people who would benefit from the AMGA. Go out with people and come up with a climbing goal. This goal can be to climb a dream climb, climb the hardest route of your life, or to simply move across the terrain we love and cherish. Through this pursuit of a goal we may find we have inspired others as well as ourselves.

When meeting strangers in the mountains, town, or at our favorite crag, I encourage you to introduce yourself and see if you can help them have a better experience. This small show of friendship can mean more to a person than any monetary gift. It will enable you to share your passion with people who will benefit from your knowledge.

A good friend and mentor of mine Jim Ratz, recently died in a climbing accident. Jim made so many differences in so many people's lives it is hard to pick out a single achievement. As a past Executive Director (ED) of NOLS, Jim was able to share his experiences with me as I learned the ropes of being an ED of a national non-profit organization. The small gesture of Jim sharing his wisdom and thoughts meant the world to me as I faced so many new

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## AMGA 2005 Rock and Approach Shoe Review



### *Montrail Splitter*

For a comfortable enough to wear all day lace-up, look no further than the Montrail Splitter. The generous toe rand performs well and provides a lot of contact with the rock, especially in cracks that are hand sized or larger. The Splitter also edges well, due to the stickiness of the Gryponite rubber and the slightly stiff sole of the shoe. The Gryptonite Rubber is also sticky enough to smear with confidence.

An overall very comfortable fit and foot shape, this shoe can be worn a little tight and can be expected to stretch almost 1 Euro size. The padded tongue is very comfortable and the lacing system is also effective at getting this shoe snug around your foot. The last thing you'll notice is that the Splitter is built to last. This shoe has a burly upper that seems built for durability and for protecting your foot when you're stuffing into wide cracks. The Splitter is a great all around shoe that has a comfortable fit for all day wear, with the build and rubber for burly crack climbing. Available at: [www.montrail.com](http://www.montrail.com) \$80



### *Montrail Zealot*

This is a great velcro slipper that fits snugly and face climbs all types of rock very well. The Gryptonite rubber is very sticky, and soon you'll be trusting your foot to stick wherever you put it. The Zealot is also sensitive and excels at overhanging rock due to a small toe point and slightly aggressive camber. While not our crack climbing or long day shoe of choice, these slippers are high performance shoes that edge and smear very well.

Sizing can be an issue with the Zealots,

as they have a generally small or snug fit with a tiny heel. The twin synthetic velcro straps on the Zealot are durable, which makes getting a snug fit a breeze, although they can be difficult to put on and take off. Lastly, the Zealots are hot to wear, because of the dark color of the shoe.

If you've got some face or small cracks to send, consider the Zealots as your shoes of choice. Available at: [www.montrail.com](http://www.montrail.com) \$70



### *Montrail CTC*

This was the best all around approach shoe we tested. Our testers also found the Montrail CTC to be very comfortable, and very sticky rubber on the sole, great for steep trails and technical approaches terrain. The Montrail CTC features a full sole of Gryptonite rubber which gives an extremely sticky grip no matter where you place it. The rubberized toe rand also adds a bit of protection for your toes. The sole is also slightly stiff, which added a bit of stability to this shoe.

Our testers found this shoe to be very comfortable and breathable, and an especially good fit for a slightly low volume foot. This shoe is also very lightweight and stylish. Overall the full sole of sticky rubber, generous toe rand, and ample cushioning make the CTC a great shoe for everything from speed and technical approaches to easy climbing. Available at: [www.montrail.com](http://www.montrail.com) \$95



### *La Sportiva Baraccuda*

A great sport climbing shoe that edges on almost anything. This is the lace up version of the popular Velcro Katana. The rubber mesh toe cap and generous rand help this shoe climb thin cracks as well as toe scum when needed. A highly technical shoe, that also can be an all day shoe if fit is just right. Available at: [www.sportiva.com](http://www.sportiva.com) \$125



### *La Sportiva Trad Master*

The name says it all. This very comfortable all around shoe is built on the great Syncro last. Besides a great foot shape, the Trad Masters have more foot padding on the upper than any other shoe we've tested to date. And fortunately the folks at La Sportiva made the upper's white, which didn't get too hot on our long trad climbs in Eldo.

Performance wise this shoe can edge with the best of them, due to a medium stiff sole and great rubber. The Frixion rubber also smears very well, and the stiff sole makes for a stable platform while you're placing gear. If you're looking for durable, all day shoes that perform well on trad climbs of all shapes and sizes, look no further. Available at: [www.sportiva.com](http://www.sportiva.com) \$110

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(continued from page 5) - Shoe Review



### *La Sportiva Raja*

This shoe is for the person looking for a great trail running shoe that also scrambles well. The unique two density sole allows for the Raja to give you soft rubber on the impact zones and sticky rubber around the edges. Not ideal for heavily rocky surfaces if you're used to stepping on rocks in the middle of your sole.

The Raja is built for long trail runs with support and generous cushioning. They are a very breathable and very lightweight shoe. While the Raja's are comfortable and secure, they may offer a more secure fit for a low volume foot, especially if your foot is wide. These shoes are also versatile enough to make a smooth transition from the trail to the asphalt. Our testers found the Raja's to be a great running shoe both on and off the trail. Available at: [www.sportiva.com](http://www.sportiva.com) \$89.95



### *Five Ten Retro*

The Five Ten Retro is a good looking approach shoe that you can wear around town or to the crag. The midsole is padded to the arch of the foot and then is very thin under the ball of the foot and toes. This makes for the most sensitive approach shoe we tested.

The S1 rubber, made specifically for approach shoes, offers the perfect blend of stickiness and shock absorption. This lightweight shoe climbs well, but would not be recommended for long approaches due to the lack of foot support and cushioning. It would be great for places like the Black Canyon, or any place where weight and rubber performance are paramount. Available at: [www.fiveten.com](http://www.fiveten.com) \$65



### *Mammut Blast*

At first glance the Mammut Blast looks like just another climbing shoe. Behind the subtle exterior lies a perfect blend of performance and long day comfort. The Mammut SF64 rubber is sticky enough to climb near your limit with confidence. And at least while the soles aren't too worn down, the Blast's are good for edging and toe in performance.

Comfort is where these shoes really shine. The extra cushion on the heel is great for all day wear (ie, standing belays), long routes, descents, and technical approaches. The thin, lightly colored upper kept our feet from overheating all day long. A simple lacing system, great foot shape and padded heel make this shoe a favorite for long climbs. Available at: [www.mammut.ch](http://www.mammut.ch) \$118



### *Guide Tennie*

The newly revised Guide Tennie is a serious all around approach shoe. The first thing our testers noticed about the Guide Tennies was the extremely sticky Stealth C4 rubber on the sole. The dotted and relatively flat outsole also allowed this shoe to be stable and maintain a high amount of surface contact with the rock.

The second thing we noticed was the very comfortable, well padded, and supportive upper. The burly outer can withstand years of punishment, and a solid lacing system brings this shoe to a snug fit. The Guide Tennies blend of rubber, stability, and comfort will meet your long approach shoe needs with ease. Available at: [www.fiveten.com](http://www.fiveten.com) \$89



### *Scarpa Marathon*

The Scarpa Marathon is a shoe that provides comfort for all day wear. This shoe would be best for a high volume foot. The Scarpa Marathon also features great padding in the heel, which added to it's comfort for standing belays and descents. While not a super technical shoe, the Marathon is great for those long day classics. Available at: [www.scarpa-us.com](http://www.scarpa-us.com) \$118



### *Scarpa Dominator*

The Scarpa Dominator turned out to be great lace up sport shoe. This shoe excels at overhanging rock due to a single-cambered last. The Dominator also gives enough support for vertical face climbs that emphasize edging. An overall sensitive shoe, available from Scarpa at: [www.scarpa-us.com](http://www.scarpa-us.com) \$74.50



### *Scarpa Lite Ascent*

The Scarpa Lite Ascent is a versatile approach shoe. It features enough support for long approaches, even with a heavy pack. The super sticky rubber was great for technical terrain and gave us confidence on easy climbing. The suede uppers seem very durable, yet remain comfortable for the long hike. Available at: [www.scarpa-us.com](http://www.scarpa-us.com) \$159



## Technical Director Update by Rob Hess

I have been in the position of Technical Director (TD) for a little over 1 year. As your TD, I have been a part of many changes in the way the AMGA operates and how it approaches education of guides. I have discussed many things in my past newsletter articles ranging from Instructor pool training and recruitment, to the exam process and conditional results on exams, to course and exam challenges, to the aspirant guide policy and finally the implementation of a new education model which includes the Guiding Skills Course. Needless to say, it has been an eventful year!

I must say that I feel very encouraged about the direction of the AMGA in these areas and feel we are gaining the maturity we have hoped for. More and more guides are seeing the value of AMGA education and thus involving themselves in the training and certification process. As we know, exam challenges were phased out this past year. Interestingly enough we have seen a rise in success on exams as this aspect of the AMGA has phased out. This past fall we saw 11 out of 13 individuals pass their Alpine Exam, 8 out of 8 pass their Rock Guide Exam this spring, and 6 of 8 pass their Ski Mountaineering Exam. Perhaps this is a fluke in that we have had an influx of talent... perhaps only time will tell. It seems though, that we are gaining the results we are looking for through the maturing of the educational process and the interest on the part of participants.

We do have some challenges ahead, which surround the implementation of the "Guiding Skills Course" as the first step in the process of training and certification. As a member of the IFMGA we are unique in that we are one of the few countries that have a need for discipline specific training in addition to the IFMGA track guides. By design this means that our programs will have some level of redundancy. The guiding skills course has been developed to minimize the redundancy of information on courses. Therefore each discipline can concentrate on the various core skills in that discipline. Nonetheless, if participants are taking multiple certification exams (ie. Rock Guide Exam and Alpine Guide Exam), there will still be redundancy in certain areas such as objective and rescue skills, which are common to all disciplines. Most other IFMGA countries require each guide to test in every discipline before gaining a certification. If our process was more linear like these countries, we could then eliminate the redundancy of our examination process.

I had the good fortune of observing a Swedish Ski Mountaineering Guides Exam in La Grave this past winter. The Swedes have a linear program as I have discussed, which only allows entrance every other year. Much of the testing differences I observed surrounded the fact that they have a linear program or in other words they did not test certain skills on the ski exam that the AMGA would test due to the fact that they had been tested earlier in their process. They also have assessment on their courses, which until very recently the AMGA did not. I left the experience feeling that the Swedes have a good standard but of much greater importance I felt good about the standard of the AMGA ski program and the skill level of the individuals completing it.

So where am I going with all of this? The final aspect of our

new education model is the implementation of "successful" or "unsuccessful" completion of courses as a part of the written and oral evaluation process. This assessment addresses the prerequisites and skills expected of a participant as stated in the course catalog. We take these prerequisites and expectations very seriously. Those unsuccessfully completing a course will be given specific terms to complete before moving forward in the discipline. These terms may vary and are at the discretion of the instructors, but will need to be completed and documented in ones guiding history log book before progressing. In more extreme cases, individuals may be asked to sit out of activities on courses if their skill level is of serious concern and / or retake the course. We feel this is in the best interest of the participants from both a safety and educational development standpoint. We must not allow participants to be a liability to other participants or instructors. As well, participants should only progress to advanced courses or exams when their skills and experience are at the prerequisite standard.

I hope all of you are having a great spring with plenty of climbing and skiing! It looks like a great season to take advantage of the spring Sierra skiing, or perhaps a desert cross training session of skiing the La Sals by morning, splitters by the afternoon, and single track by the evening.

*(continued from page 4) - A Call to Expand...*

challenges. As Vice-President of the Board of Directors, Jim was able to convey his belief of inclusion and growth. The vision was adopted by the Board and enabled the AMGA to bring in new members every year, as well as grow our influence with public land managers.

I look to people like Jim as inspiration in a world where not enough people are sharing and open. With the great spring weather I encourage you to open yourself up to others and share your love of the outdoors. I will be thinking of all of you on my next adventure and look forward to being inspired to reach new goals.





## AMGA Annual Meeting 2005 - Brevard, North Carolina

### Steve House Wins Spectators Award at the Piolet d'Or Ceremony

Grenoble, FR - On Friday February 25th an international Piolet d'Or jury gathered to award the Piolet d'Or (Golden Axe) for 2004. Over 1000 estimated visitors were in the audience. During the ceremony the honor of Spectators Award was given to Steve House, a fully certified IFMGA/UIAGM guide, for his solo ascent on the SW Face of K7 (6942 m), Pakistan.

On July 24, 2004 Steve reach the summit after three previous attempts. He climbed in a single push, without carrying bivy gear. The total roundtrip from base camp was 41 hours making this the second ascent of K7. Those in attendance at the awards ceremony recognized his incredible accomplishment through the Spectators award. His ascent stands out as one of the major alpine achievements of the previous year.

The AMGA applauds Steve for his great achievement. We would also like to recognize two other AMGA guides who were nominated for the 2004 Piolet d'Or - Kevin Mahoney and Ben Gilmore for their ascent of the East face of the Moose's Tooth in the Alaska Range. This was their second new route on the Moose's Tooth. Congratulations to all of the AMGA guides nominated for this prestigious award and for their outstanding alpine ascents in 2004!

Preparations are now well under way for the fall AMGA Annual Meeting being held in Brevard North Carolina this October. We have received a lot of interest from AMGA members wanting to offer workshops at the annual meeting, but we are still looking for many more! We are now looking for the 'technical' workshops (self rescue, navigation/GPS, lowering/rappelling, short roping, etc.) At this time we are also interested in hearing from individuals and companies that wish to display products or services at the annual meeting. Please contact Adam Fox [adam@foxmountainguides.com](mailto:adam@foxmountainguides.com) if you wish to offer a workshop, have ideas for the annual meeting or wish to be involved and help out in any way.

#### Schedule of Events: October 2005

October 14-16 (Fri-Sun)  
Wilderness First Responder Recertification

October 15-16 (Sat-Sun)  
Leave No Trace Trainer Course

October 17-19 (Mon-Wed)  
TRSM Program New Provider Training

October 18-19 (Tue-Wed)  
TRSM Program Provider Update

October 20 (Thu)  
Technical Committee Meeting

October 21 (Fri)  
Board of Directors Meeting

October 22 (Sat)  
Workshops, Vendor Displays, &  
Key Note Speaker

October 23 (Sun)  
Workshops & Demos

October 24-25 (Mon-Tue)  
AMGA Instructor Pool Training

#### Some of the Workshops offered:

Accident and Incident Reporting. Aram Attarian, Ph.D.

An Overview of Climbing Resource Management. Aram Attarian, Ph.D., John Kascenska Ph.D.

Basic Bookkeeping for Small Businesses. Peggy Evleth

Computerized Bookkeeping Systems. Peggy Evleth

The Warrior's Way: A New Perspective on Risk Assessment and Learning. Arno Ilgner

**mont-bell**  
*lighter faster*

# 12oz.

## Torrent Flier Jacket

Advanced 3-layer construction makes the Torrent Flier the lightest Gore-Tex® XCR® jacket on the market. This is an excellent choice when going Light and Fast™ in the backcountry. Streamlined design maximizes simplicity and function.

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## Mt. Rainier Permits Available

We are very excited to announce that the new Mount Rainier Commercial Services Plan for 2005 has been published. The AMGA submitted several comments on the various drafts of this plan. We lobbied for access for our certified guides and it is obvious from the outcome that these comments were taken into consideration. There are now guiding and permit opportunities at Mount Rainier National Park for AMGA certified guides. The AMGA will be glad to help with applying for a permit or answering any questions. To apply for a mountaineering commercial use authorization the applicant must be AMGA Certified in the Alpine or Ski Mountaineering Discipline, IFMGA/UIAGM Certified, or equivalent.

We hope that many of you are able to take advantage of these permitting opportunities. A big thank you goes out to the Public Policy committee for all of your hard work and help in making this happen.

For complete details please visit:  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>

## Tech Tip 2-2005: The Benefits of a Shorter Rope by Mike Alkaitis

One of the easiest ways to save weight as a guide is with your rope. What is the most appropriate length of rope you will need to successfully complete a day of guiding? A 40 meter rope weighs a third less than a 60 meter rope. Along with the weight savings comes the time and energy saved from pulling, belaying, and coiling less rope.

Many of the classic rock climbs in Eldorado Canyon State Park, Colorado can be completed with a 40 meter rope. Climbs such as the Bastille crack become a true joy with a short rope as the weight and time saved make for an even more enjoyable outing. Next time you go out see how much rope your really use and if you would have been able to use a 40, 45, or 50 meter rope.

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Photo by Brian Lee



## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

by Nancy Lea

The arrival of warm weather is one that I look forward to each year with enthusiasm. Trading in jackets for shorts and skis for rock shoes is something that I welcome. In the same way that I reorganize the clothes in my closet for the upcoming season, I also like to reorganize my workspace, tie up loose ends and make a plan for upcoming AMGA projects.

New projects are something we have in abundance of at the AMGA office. We are already getting plans underway for the October Annual Meeting in Brevard, NC. However, before we fully submerge ourselves in plans for the fall we do have some business items that are wrapping up:

- Top Rope Site Managers – a letter has been sent out to all current and expired Top Rope Site Managers explaining how to keep your certification current and how to upgrade your membership if desired. We recognize that communication with this very large and diverse group has not always been consistent and we hope that you will find the letter informative and useful.
- The scholarship program has concluded for 2005. Please take a look at the announcement of recipients in this newsletter. We hope that you continue to apply for AMGA scholarships in the future and if you are the lucky recipient of a scholarship please follow up with your course or exam report and turn it into the office at your earliest convenience.
- The June Board of Directors agenda has been e-mailed out to all members. Please take a look and write back with any suggestions or additions you would like to see on the agenda. Board members meet three times each year, this is your chance to let them know how you think the AMGA is doing.
- Protech, Mac Pac, and Montrail have all signed on as the latest supporting member sponsors of the AMGA. We hope that you take a moment to check out their products and take advantage of their pro-deal offers.
- Next month we will be asking for your Board of Director nominations. If you know someone you would like to nominate to run for the AMGA board please send this information to AMGA secretary, Maury Mckinney.
- We would like to receive your suggestions for tech tips and future guide profiles for the Mountain Bulletin. If there is something you would like to see featured please send suggestions to Brandon Walton at [Brandon@amga.com](mailto:Brandon@amga.com)

Finally, I would like to express my deepest condolences for the family and friends of AMGA Vice President, Jim Ratz. Jim was a very dedicated board director, officer and member of the AMGA family. He will be greatly missed.

Please be safe during the upcoming spring and summer guiding season.

Best Wishes,  
Nancy Lea

### 2005 Scholarship Program

This year we received hundreds of scholarship applications and the scholarship committee awarded 11 scholarships.

Congratulations to the following 2005 Scholarship Recipients:

Arc'teryx - Full tuition scholarship for Ski program awarded to Joe Vallone

The North Face - Full tuition scholarship for Alpine awarded to Dylan Taylor

NIKE ACG - Full tuition scholarship for Rock awarded to Josh Helling

Black Diamond - Full tuition scholarship awarded to Eric Leidecker

Patagonia Women's Scholarship - Full tuition scholarship awarded to Olivia Cussen

Malden Mills/Polartec - Full tuition scholarship awarded to Kent McBride

Mammut - Full tuition scholarship awarded to Kevin Mahoney

PETZL - Full tuition scholarship awarded to Julia Niles

Marmot - Full tuition scholarships awarded to Keith Garvey & Angela Hawse

Mike Hattrup Scholarship Fund - \$500 scholarship awarded to Larry Goldie

Julie Cheney Culbertson Education Fund - \$250 scholarship awarded to Norie Kizaki





(continued from page 3) - ED Corner

The AMGA is at a critical juncture in time. We have the opportunity to become a powerful national organization, or simply a small club of highly skilled individuals. The AMGA mission is to be an inclusive organization representing all mountain guides in the United States. To meet this lofty goal we must all represent the association in a professional and open manner. In conversations with friends, other guides, and land managers, educate them about the AMGA and what we represent. Once more people are aware of the AMGA, the greater our influence will become.

Land Management Plans continue to be commented on by the Public Policy Committee and we are beginning to see the benefits. The New River Gorge is coming out with their Climbing Management Plan that calls for all guides to be certified by the AMGA or other comparable program, or be working for an AMGA Accredited Guide Service. The AMGA worked with local guide services to make sure the plan was favorable to sustainable use and had the AMGA as the standard for guiding there. We will continue to work on access issues for you and I encourage you to contact the AMGA if there is a plan open for public comment on our public lands.

Liability Insurance continues to be a topic of great concern for the AMGA and our Board of Directors. We have implemented a committee devoted solely to gathering information and pursuing pos-

sible solutions. I have a lead for liability insurance if you also own a climbing gym so please contact me if you are interested, or if you are aware of a company offering commercial policies for outdoor climbing.

The AMGA is dedicated to offering you the best possible programs at an affordable rate and this year we are able to offer you discounted prices on our IFMGA level exams thanks to Black Diamond (Rock), Marmot (Ski), and The North Face (Alpine). These companies have stepped up to the Diamond Partner level and are responsible for each candidate receiving a \$400 discount on an exam. In addition, they provide a full scholarship to qualified individuals. There are 6 companies who support the AMGA at a benefactor level and offer a full scholarship to qualified individuals for a course or exam. These companies are Arc'teryx, Mammut, Nike ACG, Patagonia, Petzl, and Polartec. These scholarships and discounts amounted to over \$34,000 of direct support from our corporate partners. We will strive to continue to grow this program and I encourage you to support the companies who support you.

I look forward to facing these challenges at the AMGA with the help of you, our members. The spring brings with it great feelings of opportunity, and I hope to see you all keeping this faith until the Annual Meeting this fall in North Carolina.



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## American Mountain Guides Association - Code of Ethics

- 1) A Guide's prime concern is always the care and well being of his/her client.
- 2) A Guide must always work within his/her own physical, technical and experiential limitations.
- 3) AMGA members are responsible for accurately representing their AMGA membership categories and certification levels.
- 4) AMGA members are at all times representatives of the AMGA and should conduct themselves in a professional manner that reflects well on the AMGA, its members, and the mountain guiding profession.
- 5) Observance of the Code of Ethics is a fundamental obligation of all AMGA members.

## American Mountain Guides Association - Long Range Plan

We resolve:

1. To unify the American guiding community.
2. To have most working guides in America a member of the AMGA by the year 2010.
3. To, by the year 2015, have every Individual Member of the AMGA be certified or on the track towards becoming certified.
4. To have most Land Management agencies allow commercial mountain guiding using a system based on the National Park services Commercial Use Authorization statute.
5. To be the best resource to all Land Managers in the USA in their development of management plans pertaining to mountain guiding.
6. To have a plan in place for foreign IFMGA guides to have access opportunities in the United States of America by 2010.
7. To link Accreditation to Certification by the year 2006 and to supply the needed number of certified guides to fulfill the positions needed.
8. To grow the annual giving campaign and course endowment to underwrite the cost of our training and certification programs and to grow the scholarship programs of significance in the year 2006.
9. To substantially increase value of membership in the AMGA through services such as inexpensive liability, workers compensation and medical insurance as well as job referrals, continuing education, and client referrals.
10. To approach guides and guide services in areas of the country where AMGA courses and examinations are not currently being used to offer special "outreach" courses and exams that meet the schedules and needs of the local guiding communities. Thus growing the AMGA presence.
11. To continue to promote mountain guiding and the AMGA mission.



## PROGRAM UPDATE

by Simon Fryer

As spring showers dominate our afternoon skies and we begin to prep for the summer rock season ahead, I reluctantly shift from ski mode to running and rock climbing. I hope the recent snowfall in the Front Range will prolong hanging up the boards for just a little while longer. At this time of the year it's key to stay flexible and open to whatever the conditions dictate. Enjoy the mix and stay safe in the mountains and at the crags.

The fall Application Review Date (ARD) has just pasted and fall programs are mostly full. I've had some success adding additional instructors and examiners to programs but still there are a number of applicants that will not be enrolled. It's been a hard process with an overwhelming number of strong applicants. I will continue to try and add additional spots and programs whenever possible. The AMGA is working hard to increase the instructor/examiner pool but please keep in mind that this will take time. It's not an overnight fix but one that is top priority.

If you were not accepted into a program and have questions about your application please contact me ([simon@amga.com](mailto:simon@amga.com) or 303-271-0984. I'm happy to review the process, your application, and the decision regarding your enrollment.

Already the spring programs have wrapped up with success. We've had a number of guides complete their Rock Instructor, Rock Guide, Ski Guide, Ski Mountaineering Guide, or IFMGA Certifications. I would like to congratulate each of them and thank the instructors and examiners that were involved.

**IFMGA Guides:**

Clint Cook  
Keith Garvey  
Doug Nidever  
Bart Paull

**Rock Instructor:**

Steve Baldwin  
Randy Judycki

**Rock Guide:**

Marc Beverly  
Scott Brown  
Matt Farmer  
Ben Gilmore  
Angela Hawse  
Curtis Love  
Julia Niles  
Dylan Taylor

**Ski Guide:**

Geoff Clark  
Ben Pritchett

**Ski Mtn. Guide:**

Keith Garvey  
Kent McBride  
Doug Nidever  
Bart Paull  
Don Scharaf  
Joe Vallone

## AMGA 2005 Program Schedule

**Rock Discipline:**

**R9: Rock Instructor Course**  
N. Conway, NH Aug 29-Sept 7  
2 Spaces Available

**R10: Rock Instructor Exam - FULL**  
N. Conway, NH Sept 12-17

**R11: Adv Rock Guide Course - FULL**  
Eldo/Black Canyon, CO Sept 12-21

**R12: Rock Instructor Exam - FULL**  
Boulder, CO Sept 26-Oct 1

**R13: Rock Guide Exam - FULL**  
Red Rock, NV Oct 3-8

**R14: Adv Rock Guide Course - FULL**  
Red Rock, NV Oct 10-19

**R15: Rock Instructor Exam**  
N. Carolina, Oct 17-26  
2 Spaces Available

**Alpine Discipline**

**A2: Adv Alpine Guide Course - FULL**  
Cascades, WA June 1-11

**A3: Alpine Guide Course**  
Tetons, WY June 6-15  
1 Space Available

**A4: Adv Alpine Guide Course**  
Bugs/Ice Fields Canada Aug 31-Sept 10  
1 Space Available

**A5: Alpine Guide Exam - FULL**  
Bugs/Ice Fields Canada Aug 31-Sept 9

**A6: Alpine Guide Course - FULL**  
Sierra, CA Sept 12-21

**A7: Alpine Guide Exam - FULL**  
Cascades, WA. Sept 20-29

**A8: Adv Alpine Guide Course**  
Cascades, WA. Sept 20-30  
1 Space Available

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

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