

cover photo: Eli Helmuth

# Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

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## PRESIDENT CORNER

"Make sure to place your votes for new Board members and think seriously about how to get more involved with your American Mountain Guides Association!"

## TECHNICAL DIRECTOR CORNER

"Since we are looking at some major changes in the course and exam flow chart, we will now implement the Guiding Skills Course in 2007 as an overall reworking and implementation of the AMGA training and certification program."

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

"There is still much work to be done and logistics to be resolved, but I am hopeful the new Board of the Certified Guides Federation will be up to the task..."

Vol. XXIV No. 3 Summer 2005

## Our Most Important Client

by Dave Bengston

Hopefully you spent the last few days with one of your best clients. Maybe it was that interesting, articulate, fun-loving individual, who's a strong climber and just happens to love the same kind of climbing as you. Or maybe it was that rich guy who tips well, comes back often, and has completely life-altering experiences every time. Deep down, we all know that neither of these are our most important client. Our most important client is the land.

It is more than just the obvious: We love the land and without a place to guide there would be no clients. What we AMGA guides do (or don't do) for the land heavily influences some of the issues most important to the AMGA:

- Access
- The public's perception of our association and our profession
- Our relationships with our land managers

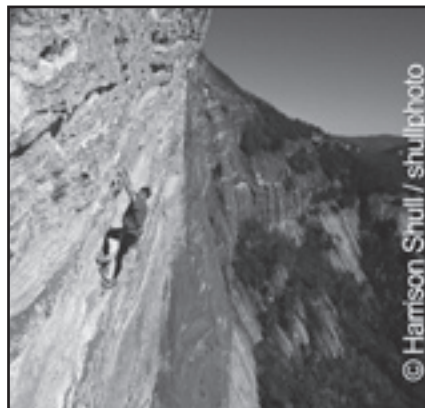
Just choosing guiding as a profession shows that we care more about the land than most—we have devoted our lives to it. But, guiding is not easy. Sometimes just surviving, let alone actually attaining the summit, requires all our guiding skills, experience and training, and every ounce of concentration. Even then, let's not forget about our most important client. All of us can put more emphasis on stewardship in our daily outings. Providing more interpretation and education is the way to do that.

*(continued on page 4)*

## AMGA Annual Meeting 2006

by Adam Fox

It's high summer here in the deep South and as always you can set your watch by the afternoon thunderstorms that descend on the North Carolina mountains at 3pm each day. I'm longing for the fall to come around and for those endless 70 degree days with powder blue skies, cool mountain breezes and perfect friction! This fall North Carolina is hosting the AMGA Annual Meeting here in the Appalachian Mountain town of Brevard on the 22nd - 23rd of October. The Meeting will be based at Brevard College renowned for its Wilderness Leadership and Experiential Education Program. The College is based on a 120 acre campus in the center of downtown Brevard which *Outside Magazine* ranked as one of the best Colleges and College Towns in America.



© Harrison Shull / shulphoto

Whitesides, NC

The conference officially kicks off on Saturday morning at the College with demonstrations and vendor displays at Dunham Hall and workshops throughout the day followed in the evening by the renowned 'silent gear auction', slide shows, speakers, the annual AMGA award ceremony and a good old Southern BBQ! This is the night to meet and

*(continued on page 6)*



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### Newsletter Deadline

The **Mountain Bulletin** is published in May, August, November and February. The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Deadline for all submissions, including advertising is Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 IFMGA guide and current president of the AMGA.

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

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

Dave Bengston a Certified Rock Guide and the Director of Yosemite Mountaineering School. He is also a Leave No Trace Master Educator.

Angela Hawse is a Certified Rock Guide and serves on the AMGA Board of Directors

Kyle Lefkoff is a Director and Treasurer of the AMGA. He is a Partner in Boulder Ventures Ltd., a venture capital fund in Boulder, Colorado.

Eli Helmuth is the Alpine Discipline Coordinator, IFMGA Certified, and Head Guide for Colorado Mountain School.

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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 - Certified Guides Federation

by Michael Alkaitis, AMGA Executive Director

The AMGA Board of Directors is committed to gaining access on our public and private lands for mountain guides. As a result of this commitment the Board in January of 2005 created a committee to look into the formation of a non profit to gain permits and insurance for certified members of the AMGA. The committee looked into the possibility and was impressed with the promise this avenue created. Boots Ferguson from the Board and Holland and Hart Law firm agreed to incorporate and write the first By Laws of the new non profit.

The first step of the process to incorporate is nearing an end and I am proud to announce the seven Certified Members of the AMGA who have volunteered to sit on the original Board of Directors of the "Certified Guides Federation". These members are: Keith Garvey (IFMGA), Alan Jolley (Rock), Bart Paull (IFMGA), Miles Smart (IFMGA), Joe Thompson (TRSM), Jeff Ward (IFMGA), and Amos Whiting (IFMGA). It is great to see these certified individuals making a commitment to volunteer their time to help the future of American guides.

The official purpose of the Certified Guides Federation from the By Laws is: to apply for and secure access permits and authorizations from public and private land managers for access for guided climbing activities on such lands by its members. This simple statement will enable the AMGA to effectively help start a non profit for certified members to join. These members would all be covered by the liability insurance and permits of the non profit. In the future we believe this will be an avenue foreign IFMGA guides will be able to use to legally guide in the United States of America.

There is still much work to be done and logistics to be resolved, but I am hopeful the new Board of the Certified Guides Federation will be up to the task while receiving assistance from the AMGA and its members. If you have any questions or would like to help, please contact Mike Alkaitis at 303-271-0984, or [mike@amga.com](mailto:mike@amga.com).

Have a great summer,  
Mike Alkaitis



## The President's Corner - The State of the AMGA

by Dick Jackson, AMGA President

With the mid-summer alpenglow reflecting against the lingering snow on Mt. Sopris, I finally have some free time to assess the state of the AMGA after nearly four years at the helm of the association's Board of Directors. Back in 2001, the number one priority was to unify the American mountain guiding community, and we have certainly come a long way towards that goal.

Last fall's annual membership meeting in Moab was both the AMGA's 25th anniversary and the largest and most diversified attendance to date. Our guide training program has also matured with the soon to be initiated format that should address the changing needs of our entry-level guides. On the International front, the AMGA has gained a position of respectful recognition in the IFMGA. With nearly a dozen Delegation and Technical Commission meetings attended, I can personally appreciate the progress we've made with the support and confidence in the AMGA's authentic attempts to offer limited access to IFMGA guides abroad. On the home front, the Board recently established an Endowment Fund to subsidize the costs of tuition for both certification courses and exams. This is in direct response to the number one request from the membership which is to help reduce the cost of guide training through subsidized funding and an increasing scope of scholarships. Also during the past four years the AMGA has gotten its 'house in order'!

Through the cohesive and productive efforts of the Board and the Executive Director, Mike Alkaitis, the AMGA has become financially stable and focused on the challenges that lie ahead. My hat (helmet?) goes off to everyone I've worked so hard with: Nancy as our Membership Director, Simon as our Program Director, Brandon as Program Assistant, and of course Rob Hess as Technical Director. As I prepare to pass the gavel along to the AMGA's next president, I look forward to staying active in the tasks that all of us as members should take pride with our participation. There is a lot of hard work ahead for this association of American Mountain Guides! And there are many directly related rewards to be shared.

With the newly formed non-profit Certified Guides Federation the issue of limited access for both American certified guides and IFMGA foreign guides is at stake. Concurrent with the Public Policy Committee's efforts to push forward the approval of CUA's (Commercial Use Authorizations) on US National Parks and other public lands, the Certified Guides Federation will be assigned the task of providing insurance and permits whose costs will be shared by the beneficiaries of their efforts. So it's obvious that these "certified guides" and these "beneficiaries" are one in the same! With all the substantial progress that we have achieved in recent years, we have much more to accomplish in the years ahead! We've come a long way, but just as the analogous 'false summit' reveals itself through the clouds, the true summit beckons and awaits our hard fought efforts to succeed in getting there (and back, in that case)! This fall will be the AMGA's first presence in the southeast for its annual membership meeting and other scheduled events. Check the E-News and Newsletter for the full schedule and make plans to be there! Let's continue to ride the wave and keep the momentum flowing! Make sure to place your votes for new Board members and think seriously about how to get more involved with your American Mountain Guides Association! Thank you for the opportunity to help make a difference in our future!

Bon Journee, Namaste, Tashi Delek, & Take Care! - Dick Jackson



(continued from page 1) - Important Client

Some might argue that the land manager is our most important client. It is true that the land managers grant us our permits, so we need to follow their lead. Sometimes we forget that their greater resources allow them more objectivity and better decisions about how best to care for the land. But really, we're in it together as stewards of the land, or as they call it, "The Resource."

Obviously, there are extremely negative consequences for not holding up our end of the bargain when it comes to our relationship with our land managers. But mistakes here are even worse than you might think, especially since our goal is to increase access for guides. It is critical that we collectively keep our minds on one objective: AMGA guides must prove, in everything that we do, that we help land managers preserve and protect the resource through our operational procedures and by educating the public. We need to make it obvious that we are helping with management objectives and saving budgeted resources by doing some of the land managers' work for them. If AMGA guides always do more than the minimum required in our permits, we will be beneficial partners, which is fundamental to improving access for AMGA guides.

**The National Park Service Organic Act**  
(Aug. 25 1916)

The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations ... purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Whether it is State, Forest, National Park, Bureau of Land Management land, or something else, American guides depend on access to public lands. The missions of most land management agencies are fairly similar. They all include mandates to "protect" or "care for" the land. In Wilderness we have even more responsibility because the land managers' mandate is to manage use, such that the wilderness is unimpaired for future use "as Wilderness." Luckily, in addition to "protect" and/or "care for" the land, there is

always something like: and provide for the enjoyment or use of the people. That "and" is very important because restricting access is the easiest way to protect the land. It is difficult to care for the land and use it at the same time, but this is where our strength lies. Teaching others how to "properly" use the land is what makes our services most valuable to land managers.

**Wilderness Act**  
(Sept. 3 1964)

In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. ... "wilderness areas", and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding ...

Those of us who manage permits know very well what our land managers require. Most of that is on the top of our list too, because we care about the land and we want to do the best for our clients. One thing is certain, if it's in the permit, it's important. Unfortunately, guides in the field do not always know what is in their permits. All guides should actually read their permits occasionally. Land managers want us to know how to "properly" use the land, so that kind of information is usually right in the permit.

Some permits are more specific and informative than others, but all land managers appreciate additional help with their management objectives. The following may or may not be in your permit, but these are areas where client education and strong modeling really take our service to the next level. Model good behavior so your clients want to do the right thing. Educate them, so they know how.

1. Leave No Trace
2. Interpretation
3. Invasive species
4. Cultural and archeological sites

5. Sensitive areas
6. Rescue assistance
7. Trail maintenance

**USFS Mission ([www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)):**

The phrase, "CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE," captures the Forest Service mission. As set forth in law, the mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.

Communication with our land managers is an important part of a healthy relationship with our most important client, not to mention the land managers. Our exact role with many of the above depends on the resource and current management direction, so they require communication with our land managers. The last thing we want to do is hurt, while trying to help. Chat with your manager(s) occasionally. Ask about new issues. Visit the visitor center. Remember, communication works both ways: Land managers need to know about conditions in the field.

**BLM Mission:**  
([www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov))

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Connecting the visitor with the resource, Interpretation, is important for a number of reasons. The simplest is that a visitor who has a connection with the resource is more likely to care about it and therefore care for it. That type of connection is automatic with climbing, so this is an easy home run for us, but we really should be going much farther. Learning about the resource improves that interpretive connection. Understanding the resource makes it possible for people to protect it and enjoy it without changing or hurting it. So in reality, it is our responsibility to provide as much information as possible, more than just climbing and guiding techniques. The beauty is that this non-climbing interpretation adds tremendous value to our service.

It is impossible to know everything, so pick your niche. Start with something that you already know or are interested in and then study. One of the most important rules here is, keep it accurate. If you do not know, say so—that's OK. Look at it as an opportunity, not embarrassing, and look it up.

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## Guide's Gear



### Julbo Addict Sunglasses

Reviewed by Simon Fryer of the AMGA

When designing these shades, Julbo kept the skier, boarder, and climber in mind. In fact they are ideal for environments like snow and water where glare is a factor. On a recent spring ski tour I was pleasantly surprised when they lived up to Julbo's claims.

The first thing I noticed about these sunglasses was the lightweight construction. Quickly I forgot they were on my face and after an hour and a half of uphill skinning I was sold. In addition the Addict has impact-resistant frames with comfortable flex sides to form fit any size melon. With the combination of a non-slipping nose pad it was obvious Julbo had comfort in mind. The Spectron X4 lenses provide 100% UV protection and 87% light reduction. As an added bonus the Addicts come with a sturdy plastic case to avoid getting crushed while in your pack.

Affordable, comfortable, stylish, and well designed made the Addict an easy choice the next time I was headed out for a day in the hills. Retail price: \$50 Check out [www.julbousa.com](http://www.julbousa.com) for more info or call 800-651-0833 for pro orders.



### Mammut Ice 35L Men's Backpack

Reviewed by John Bicknell, Certified Rock Guide

I have used the Mammut Ice 35 for a little over a month now (24 guiding and climbing days) and I have been impressed—it's a fine pack, versatile enough to handle a variety of uses. It's been my primary rock cragging pack. It's also served as an expedition pack to Bolivia, handling everything from simple glacier travel to a 10 pitch alpine ice climb. With careful packing, it can handle a two

day climb, but it shines most as a single day rock, ice, and alpine climbing pack.

The Butterfly suspension system is very comfortable and the pack does not get in your way while you climb—sometimes I can almost forget it's on. The pack has a clean profile and not many bells and whistles (which is what I want). The pack has a simple hydration system, side straps, and ice tool holders. It is a top-loader with a top pocket that has generous compartments. Simple, efficient, comfortable—if those are what you look for in a climbing pack, the Ice 35 is an excellent choice. Retail \$155.00. For pro orders please contact 800-451-5127 or email at [info@mammutusa.com](mailto:info@mammutusa.com)



### Patagonia Houdini Full Zip Jacket

Reviewed by Brandon Walton of the AMGA

When it comes to ultra lightweight jackets, it seems that less is truly more. The Houdini Full Zip Jacket accompanied our test team on Eldo-

rado multipitch routes, the local mountain bike trails, and even to the office. At just 3.6 oz, and a packed size smaller than a softball, you won't even feel the Houdini in your backpack. Besides being extremely unintrusive, the Houdini also offers wind protection, breathability and water resistance in a stylish jacket.

Our testers also appreciated the snug fitting hood and athletic style fit of the Houdini. As previously mentioned, it can stuff into its own small chest pocket complete with clipable sewn loop. While not 100% waterproof, our testers found the Deluge DWR finish to be ample in light and sporadic rains, but found that sections of the jacket started soaking through in heavy downpours or rains lasting longer than 30 minutes.

So whether you're climbing, running, biking, hiking, or just walking to the office, the Men's Houdini is an excellent piece of mind to have hidden away in your pack. Besides... you won't even know it's in there until you take it out. Retail \$135 Available at [www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com).

AMGA Certified guides can check out [www.patagoniapro.com](http://www.patagoniapro.com) for pro purchase information.





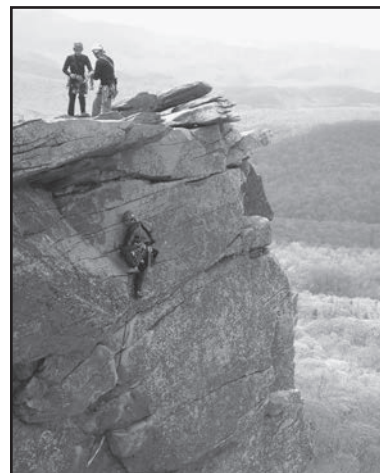
(from page 1)

network with guides and guide service owners from across the country, and also catch up with old friends! We will be offering more workshops on Sunday morning mainly out at the crags, followed by the legendary Guides Olympics in the afternoon being held at the Sunwall of Looking Glass Rock. We have already lined up many quality workshops and clinics ranging from business and teaching, to technical skills. We are currently finalizing many more workshops and the membership will be emailed with the final list nearer the meeting along with enrollment information. For AMGA members that are interested they can attend the AMGA Board of Directors Meeting on Friday, the 21st to hear the debates, to have your voice heard, and to witness the decision making process in the AMGA. If you wish to offer a workshop or live locally and want to help out with the meeting please contact me at [adam@foxmountainguides.com](mailto:adam@foxmountainguides.com)

A common question I'm getting these days is: So what is there to climb? This area is the home to world class climbing from Boone bouldering to 1,000 ft trad lines on Whitesides, Rumbling Bald sport climbing

to intimidating A5/IV aid climbs on Looking Glass Rock's North Face, NC rivals any state in America! Brevard is located 15 minutes from Looking Glass Rock where you will find volumes of classic multipitch crack, face and slab climbs on the South Face and Nose areas and steep bulging 4-5 pitch 5.10-5.12 trad lines on the Sun Wall. The North Face offers multi day aid climbs of all grades and the stellar 'Yosemite' style multipitch 5.11 crack systems of climbs like 'Corn Flake Crack' and 'The Womb'. Other climbing areas within 15 minutes of the conference are Cedar and Johns Rock, both offering great multipitch trad climbing in a wilderness setting. Within an hours drive lies Whitesides Mountain, where you can find long and scary 5.11-5.12's. The 'easiest' line at Whitesides is the classic 10 pitch 'Original Route' 5.11a/IV. The climber that's seeking out single pitch sport or short granite splitter cracks should head down to Rumbling Bald in the Hickory Nut Gorge. Apparently there's some good bouldering there too. This year's conference is also a great starting point for a Southeast tour with the Tennessee Wall, Seneca Rocks, New River and Red River Gorges all within a 5 hour drive.

While you're in the area you can also indulge in other adventure pursuits such as the whitewater kayaking found on the Green, Nantahala, and Ocoee rivers (to name but a few), and the mountain biking in Pisgah National Forest and DuPont State Forest just 20 minutes from Brevard.



I hope to see you at this year's conference and share a rope with you on some of this country's most spectacular climbing you've never heard of!

- Adam Fox

(Annual Meeting Schedule continued on page 10)

## Patagonia proudly supports the AMGA

800 638 6464 [patagonia.com](http://patagonia.com)

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



Patagonia pledges at least 1% of sales, \$20 million in grants and in-kind donations to date, to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment.  
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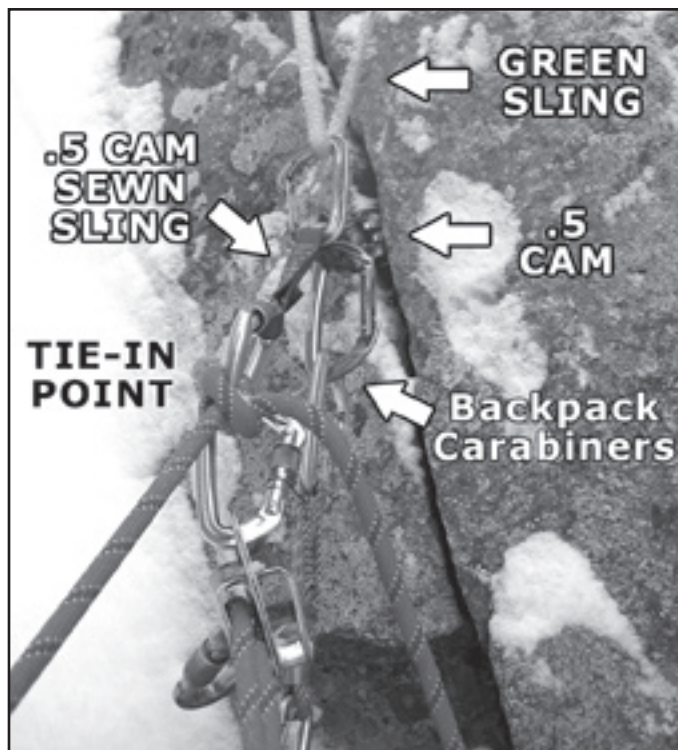
## Tech Tip 3: Alpine Anchors

by Eli Helmuth

Overall speed is usually a critical factor in increasing safety margins in the mountains. We cannot typically speed-up our client's pace to a great extent but we can increase our own climbing pace when necessary. An additional way for a guide to gain speed is to quickly set-up adequate anchors. A quick anchor will get your clients on belay faster and, if built correctly, will be easy and speedy for a client to later dismantle. This article will look at some ways of speeding up the anchor building process.

The standard 3-pc. anchor tied together with a cordalette is our most common rock guiding anchor. The convenience of having a "master point" and being able to quickly "pre-equalize" with a cord is helpful but this common technique has some disadvantages in the alpine realm. Long cordalettes are heavy and our guests can have difficulty cleaning and carrying these behemoth wads of material (keeping all materials above mid-thigh is a key principle in alpine rack carrying so as to not create a tripping hazard for guide and client). I have personally not carried a standard length (6 meter) cordalette in the mountains for the last few years.

What are the alternatives for anchor building? Standard materials such as sewn 12" and 24" nylon runners are more versatile, lighter and easier to carry. It takes a bit more creativity to rig equalized anchors with just these materials but the results can be very satisfying. Using locking carabiners as master points and knowing that the sewn slings on cams are full-strength and can be used as multi-directional attachment points help simplify this process.



In the first anchor, the green sling above is looped over a solid horn. This sling comes down perfectly to a point where it can be equalized with the sewn sling on a solid .5 camalot. A locker on the end of the camalot makes for a great tie-in point and I've stacked my Reverso on top of my tie-in locker to keep the system running smooth. My client's locker will clip directly next to mine into the end of the camalot sling. The other carabiner's hanging from the camalot are holding my pack while I belay (and eat chips).

In the second anchor, I have used a 24" sewn nylon runner to build my initial 2-pc. anchor which is tied off with an overhand on a bight. The orange tcu on the bottom is clipped into the upper end of this bight so that all three pieces are being equally weighted. Although there is an angle between the orange and yellow tcu's, even at 90 degrees the vector forces are negligible. The green bight makes for an easy master-point and I have the option of removing the orange tcu before I lead the next pitch to maximize my gear. I feel totally comfortable leaving two clients on a ledge on a two-piece anchor.



The greatest forces I believe my anchor will encounter while guiding are while belaying two clients at once as it is virtually impossible to eliminate all slack in the system and thus a shock-loading type fall is possible. Since I still haven't fallen while leading a guided day, I worry less about a factor-2 type fall onto my belayer/anchor and so two solid pieces are justified. If I'm concerned about a fall near the anchor, I can always place the orange tcu 3-6" above the anchor as my first piece to eliminate the potential factor-2 forces.

I've taught more than a dozen AMGA alpine courses at this point in time, and speedy anchoring is one of the areas alpine guides struggle with the most. Try timing yourself and see if you can significantly decrease your anchor building time without compromising the strength of your anchors. Maybe leave the cordalette at home for a while and see if you can do without. Always test the rock and placement before trusting their integrity. Kick the rock (rather than hitting it) and yank on cams (shock-load with a runner) to test the rock quality and placement. Too many candidates have neglected to thoroughly check these aspects of rock/gear quality and found out (after I've kicked the entire block off) that they missed this foundational part of anchoring.



(continued from page 4)

Leave No Trace (LNT) is another thing that we cannot afford to neglect in any outing. LNT really is different than any of the previous environmental concepts: "Minimum Impact," "Take only memories, leave only footprints," etc. LNT principles are simple and positive. They are well researched, organized and thought out. It's a great organization that is more intent on getting the word out than on profiting from its intellectual property. Across the board, land managers support LNT.

LNT is the right thing to do for the resource. For many of our clients, it is a relief to find out that we follow these principles in order to protect "their land." These clients are usually excited to learn and use the techniques themselves. Other clients can be a tough sell, but they are the most important to reach. Strong modeling is always effective, even when LNT discussions are challenging. Everyone, even these resistant clients, appreciate it when other people use LNT techniques.

Imagine the power of being able to say, when negotiating for access for AMGA

guides on public lands, every client of every AMGA guide gets "Leave no Trace" training. We really do need to bring LNT to every client. Embracing LNT may be the single best way to improve your relationship with your land managers. It certainly is the best way to improve your relationship with the land.

Even with our best stewardship efforts, there are more than a few people who think that there should not be commercial operators on public lands. At best, some think that should be secondary to public use. This public perception is another challenge we face regarding access. At the last AMGA Board of Directors meeting in Boulder, the point was reiterated that it is important for us to avoid referring to our use as commercial use. We need to represent ourselves as the "guided public." The reality, as we all know, is that our clients are the public too. Not everyone realizes that fact. We need to change public perception. We need to help the public understand that in addition to being the public too, we add the land managers' agenda through education, and the safety and guidance inherent in our training and experience. We are beneficial partners. The easiest way to feel great about making

a living off of public land is to ensure that each of your guests is a better user and cares more about the resource because of your guidance and education. Many our clients are exactly the people that the land managers most want to reach. That is because new users are prone to mistakes that cause damage. Without our services, they would probably go out there anyway. They would learn as they go, sometimes at the expense of the resource. Feel good: Help others avoid damage.

AMGA guides already focus on exceptional guiding and climbing instruction, as we should. Let's ratchet our stewardship up a notch. Let's take it to the next level by providing additional interpretation, modeling and education. They add value to our guiding services, improve our relationship with our land managers, and help in our goal of improving access for AMGA guides. But the bottom line is, interpretation, modeling and education are super important aspects of caring for our most important client, the lands on which we work and play.

- Dave Bengston





## Technical Director Update

by Rob Hess, Technical Director

Ah yes, summer is here and for many the most busy guiding season of the year. We have had an unusually intense Technical branch e-mail discussion this past spring. As everyone has become busy with summer pursuits, the e-mail traffic has tapered off. The end result has been major dialogue focusing on the AMGA training and certification program.

I discussed in the last newsletter, the favorable results we have seen on exams this past year. As we mature and more young guides look to the AMGA as the standard method of breaking into the field of guiding, we must continue to look at our programs and how efficiently we are training these individuals.

Some of the biggest challenges we face are:

- Accommodating an increased desire for courses and exams.
- Developing the instructor pool to allow us to meet this increased demand.
- Elimination of redundancy in our programs through the reworking of the course and exam flow and the implementation of the Guiding Skills Course.
- Reworking of the course and exam prerequisites.
- Assurance of movement / skiing skills in those entering the Ski training and certification programs.
- Continued development of the aspirant / mentoring process.

We had originally resolved to implement the Guiding Skills Course in 2006. Since we are looking at some major changes in the course and exam flow chart, we will now implement the Guiding Skills Course in 2007 as an overall reworking and implementation of the AMGA training and certification program. With this in mind, we have rescheduled the Technical Committee meeting from one day at the annual meeting in North Carolina, to 2-3 days in Las Vegas in early November.

We are looking very closely at our course and exam needs and are developing a three-year plan to develop and increase the instructor pool so we will have the ability to accommodate the increased demands. Though quality of staff is of primary concern as it is important to teach from experience, I put a call out to those interested in getting involved in the instructor pool to apply. I detailed the application process in the Winter 2005 Newsletter as

well, and Mike Alkitis outlined the process in the last newsletter.

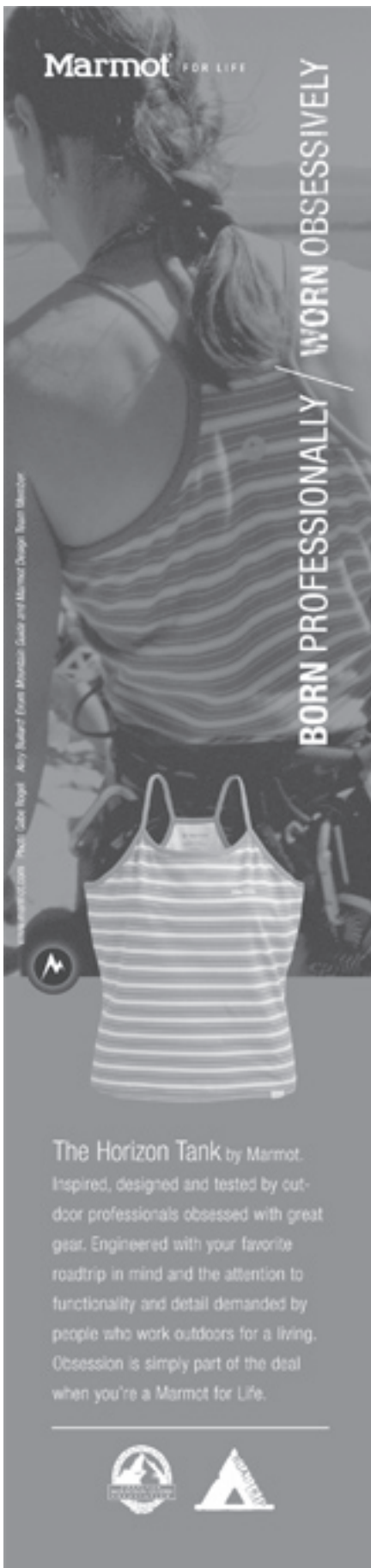
I encourage all individuals entering the program in the next year to look at the prerequisites for the courses very carefully. We may ultimately have pre-entrance tests that determine whether ones movement and or skiing skills are at the standard. In the interim, be advised that if one comes to courses with substandard skills they may be asked to retake the course at a later date.

My final call to action involves the aspirant program and mentoring process. Talk to any individual that has completed any or all of the AMGA certifications and they will tell you that the most valuable education and time spent was when they were working with a certified guide through the aspirant program and/or mentoring process. I encourage all individuals aspiring to gain certification to seek out experienced guides willing to work with you to help improve your skills in a practical setting. As well, I implore those certified to open themselves up to, and seek out those wanting to work under certified guides. If you are a guide service operator, consider developing an apprentice program. If you are an independent guide, invite a certified guide to accompany you on your next big trip. On your trip, tail this guide or have them guide you on a mock outing. All this is essential to the future health of our organization.

If not already doing so, aspiring guides must start a guiding history note book and start cataloging guided and mock guided climbs, compiling signatures of those mentored under, logging courses and training sessions and climbs done with other aspirants. Though this is already a requirement, it will become more important in the future as we progress into the restructured training and certification program.

Aspiring guides following the above suggestions will likely experience more opportunities for guide training and certification. These suggestions also ensure that the individual will be relaxed and confident when they embark on the examination process.

Good luck to all and have a safe and busy summer!





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## Membership Corner - Get the Word Out

by Nancy Lea, AMGA Membership Director



Dear AMGA Member,

We are at the mid-point for the year and it is a good time to evaluate what we have accomplished so far and our goals for the rest of the year.

In the membership category, the AMGA seems to be holding steady. We see a surge or new memberships each year at the associate level but past trends have shown us that the new members only make up for the old members that we lose each year. Many of our members that join do so on a one-time basis so that they can take an AMGA training course. Another trend we see is that Individual members or those Associates that upgrade to Individual members are more likely to renew with the AMGA each year. There are obvious reasons for this. Many Individual members enjoy the privilege of the Pro Purchase Program and most are working towards certification in at least one discipline.

We will always experience a turnover with our membership, that is the nature of our industry. In the meantime, what can we do better to attract existing working guides as well as those individuals that only join for a one-time course? With a very limited marketing budget, how do we bring new members on and more importantly keep them year after year? In an ideal world, we would offer phenomenal benefits for joining including great insurance coverage. We hope that this benefit will one day become a reality and we are working towards this goal. In the meantime, what can we do better? How else can we be a resource to you, the working guide?

I ask two favors from you. First, if you have great ideas for feasible benefits that can be implemented in the short-term, please share those ideas with me. As your Membership Director I enjoy hearing from you, the members, on what we are doing well and what we can improve. Second, if you are proud of the AMGA go out there and tell other guides about it. Ask local guides to join. Call the AMGA office and obtain our latest brochure, hand this marketing tool out to clients. In short, help spread the word! We have grown into an established trade organization largely by word of mouth and grass roots marketing over the years. A handful of dedicated guides have helped turn the AMGA into what it is today. I believe this is only the beginning. With greater numbers come greater benefits. Take action in your local community and let folks know about the AMGA.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you on your ideas. Have a happy and safe summer season!

Best Wishes,  
Nancy Lea

*(continued from page 6)*

### 2005 AMGA Annual Meeting Overview

**Sunday Oct 16th:** WFR Recert

**Monday Oct 17th:** WFR Recert

**Tuesday Oct 18th:** TRSM New Provider Training, LNT Trainer Course

**Wednesday Oct 19th:** TRSM Provider Update Workshop, LNT Trainer Course

**Thursday Oct 20th:** TRSM Provider Update Workshop

**Friday Oct 21st:** Board of Directors Meeting, AMGA Hospitality Event (evening party)

**Saturday Oct 22nd:** Clinics, Annual Meeting silent auction, slide show, and celebration

**Sunday Oct 23rd:** Clinics, Guides Olympics

### Workshops Being Offered

(full writeup on workshops available at [www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com))

**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

### Workshops (continued)

**Climbing Harnesses for Guides and Clients.** Goose Kears President, Misty Mountain Threadworks, Inc.

**Instructional Techniques for Climbing Instruction.** Patrick Weaver

**Communication Systems in Guiding.**

**Communication Devices that can be Utilized in Guiding Situations.**

**Rope Rescue for Multipitch Guiding**

**Guiding Multiple Clients**





## AMGA Membership Form

INDIVIDUAL, ASSOCIATE AND STUDENT ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Guide service I work for \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I began guiding professionally in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

I guide professionally about \_\_\_\_\_ days per year. (not required for Student and Associate Memberships)

### Check the type of membership you are applying for:

#### STUDENT ASSOCIATE MEMBER

- \$40 check or money order
- Include proof of enrollment with Student Associate Member

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBER

- \$60 check or money order

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

- \$115 for new individual members, \$100 for renewing members (check or money order)
- resume of guided climbs, minimum 40 paid days in the last two years
- resume of personal climbs, minimum 20 climbs
- at least two letters of reference  
(at least one must be from a fellow guide; the other can be from a client)

#### CERTIFIED INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

- \$115 for new individual members, \$100 for renewing members (check or money order)
- resume of guided climbs, minimum 40 paid days in the last two years
- resume of personal climbs, minimum 20 climbs
- at least two letters of reference  
(at least one must be from a fellow guide; the other can be from a client)

Check that you have enclosed ALL listed items in appropriate column in same envelope to:  
**AMGA Membership, P.O. Box 1739, Boulder, CO 80306.**

Yes, I'd like to make an additional, tax-deductible contribution to further support the AMGA.  
I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you wish to pay by credit card please fill out the following:

Credit Card Number:

Expiration Date:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Card Type (Visa and MC only): Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to support high standards of safety and professionalism in mountain guiding and instruction. I understand that the AMGA does not condone guiding without appropriate authorization and that the AMGA does not endorse any illegal guiding, whether in the US. or another country. I also understand that I, or any AMGA member may be subject to the loss of membership, accreditation or certification if such practices occur.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### AMGA Merchandise



(front)

Men's T - Tools, Skis, & Cam - \$18



(back)

Men's T - Is Your Guide Certified?



Women's T - AMGA Logo - \$12



Men's Sweatshirt - AMGA Logo - \$25

Check out all of our  
AMGA merchandise at:  
[www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com)  
or call 303.271.0984 to order.



## AMGA Treasurer's Report to Members

by Kyle Lefkoff

The AMGA is a non-profit corporation governed by a membership-elected Board of Directors, who provide the AMGA's professional staff strategic, operational, and financial direction. Financial direction comes from the Finance Committee of the Board. As Treasurer, I Chair the Finance Committee alongside John Bicknell and Maury McKinney. Together, we work with Mike Alkaitais and his staff to prepare a yearly budget for the AMGA, oversee our performance against planned financial objectives, and set the investment policy that guides how we invest our cash reserves and restricted accounts. While the entire AMGA Board has a fiduciary obligation to the organization, it is the Finance Committee that has frontline responsibility for insuring that the AMGA is a stable, well-financed entity capable of carrying out the goals of our membership.

Each quarter, the Finance Committee presents a report to the AMGA Board on the financial status of the organization, and each year, we present an Annual Report to the Membership.

In 2004, the AMGA completed its first outside audit, and received an unqualified opinion ("a clean opinion") from our outside auditors. We've posted these 2004 audit results on our website, and are proud that our books and records reflect the highest standard of financial accounting.

Operationally, 2004 was a year of consolidation for the AMGA after dramatic growth in 2002 and 2003. Since our entry into the IFMGA, demand for our guides courses, as well as restricted and unrestricted gifts to our Course Endowment, have grown significantly. The

AMGA posted a loss from operations in 2004, but has been strongly profitable for the past three years, and we expect this long-term trend to continue in 2005 and in the future.

As of mid-year 2005, our Course Endowments and unrestricted cash accounts total more than \$350,000. Income from these accounts fund scholarships for aspirant Guides. One of our key goals at the AMGA is to continue to increase our Course Endowment, both through gifts and through our investments, to provide additional funding and training opportunities for AMGA Guides.

Our endowment is conservatively invested under our investment policy: we invest no more than 10% of cash reserves in any one month, in order to avoid exposure to market or interest rate swings. Our investments are made each month 80% in fixed income instruments and 20% in indexed stock accounts. While this approach results in a slow investment pace, it insures that our endowment is safely invested over time into a diverse portfolio that maximizes current income for our scholarships.

The Finance Committee is proud of our progress at the AMGA, and dedicated to the long-term financial health of our organization, so that future generations of American Guides can benefit from the hard work and success of our organization. The Finance Committee welcomes your comments and suggestions on our activities, and encourages all of our members to play an active role in promoting the AMGA's Course Endowment among your guided clients.



Don't be afraid to move mountains, or let them move you.

Willie Benegas heads to the sharp end of the rope wearing his Universal Infusion Pant. 17,000 feet. Latok 1, Pakistan. Photo: Damian Benegas.



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## AMGA Awards

by Angela Hawse

Serving as the Chair of the Awards Committee since our inception last year has been a great honor and I thank those of you who have taken the time to nominate someone. Reading about the endeavors and lifework of these stellar individuals is inspiring and reminds me to reflect upon those who have influenced my career as a guide.

Each summer when I return to the Tetons, I am in awe not only of the wealth of experience that my colleagues possess, but also their humility. From nearly two decades of guiding I have had the opportunity to learn from and work with some of the best guides in the country. Their influence on me personally and professionally has been profound and I am grateful for what I have learned from them.

I encourage you to reflect upon your heroes and those who have influenced your career as a guide, either through encouragement, mentoring or emulating traits you aspire to attain. Honor those individuals by nominating them for an AMGA Award next year. Tell us about them and how they have moved you. And in the future, we hope that you'll be nominated for your contribution to the profession of American mountain guiding.

## GORE Signs On As Newest AMGA Diamond Sponsor

Boulder, CO - W.L Gore and Associates, LLC has announced that it will join the AMGA as a Diamond Sponsor. GORE is the maker of GORE-TEX® products and WINDSTOPPER® products. They will become the outfitting sponsor for the AMGA Instructor pool. They will provide instructors with AMGA embroidered jackets and pants. A full tuition scholarship will also be added to the growing scholarship program. This scholarship will be open to any AMGA course or exam, for more information please read the scholarship announcement below.

GORE has joined the AMGA as the fourth Diamond Level Sponsor. The other three sponsors at this level are Black Diamond, Marmot, and The North Face. Each of these companies has subsidized exams in the Rock, Ski, and Alpine disciplines. They all offer full-tuition scholarships. The Diamond level of sponsorship was created by Mike Alkaitis, AMGA Executive Director, in 2003. So far this sponsorship category has raised over \$50,000 for the AMGA with a large percentage of these funds going directly to exam participants in the form of subsidized exams and full tuition scholarships.

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- Pete Athans



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toll-free 866.462.6599. Coupon Code - AMGAPP\_060535

## AMGA Board of Directors Ballot – 2005

Please take a moment to vote for up to five individuals to be seated on the AMGA Board of Directors in October. Only Individual and Certified Individual Members of the AMGA are eligible to vote in the Board of Directors election, as part of their membership benefits. You can view the position statements at [www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com). Cut this ballot out and send it via mail to PO Box 1739, Boulder, CO 80306 or fax your vote in to 303-271-1377. Ballots will be accepted until September 23, 2005. Election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting and posted to the AMGA website.

Vote for up to five of the following individuals:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pete Absolon     | <input type="checkbox"/> John Bicknell   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joe Lentini      | <input type="checkbox"/> Maurey McKinney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Race        | <input type="checkbox"/> Matt Schonwald  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Margaret Wheeler | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Williams    |

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

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

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



## Program Update - The Challenges of Growth

by Simon Fryer, AMGA Program Director

It's hard to believe but I've been at the AMGA for just over four and half years now. It's been a busy bunch of years and perhaps that's why I have to double check to make sure I'm counting correctly. During this time we've moved the national office, doubled our staff, and program enrollment has skyrocketed. All in all, it's been the ideal time to be a part of this organization.



When I started, AMGA education was just beginning to show its potential in the guiding industry. There were only small pockets of guides supporting certification and looking to further their education. Now as each season takes hold, I'm impressed and at times overwhelmed by the number of guides seeking training and certification. It's been a great challenge.

The number of applications I've received this year for exams alone has grown by 300% over 2004. That's been a staggering number to accommodate and at the same time an encouraging response from the guiding industry. Each year we expand our programs in an effort to meet this growing demand. This steady growth will continue in 2006 in order to insure those who have completed the program prerequisites will have the opportunity to enroll.

Please take a look at the 2006 program schedule posted on the AMGA website ([www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com)) along with the 2006 Application Review Dates below. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at [simon@amga.com](mailto:simon@amga.com) or 303-271-0984.

### 2006 Application Review Dates:

- November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005: This is the review date for all AMGA programs running from January –April, 2006
- January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006: This is the review date for all AMGA programs running from May-August, 2006
- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006: This is the review date for all AMGA programs from September- December, 2006

On an unrelated note... Insurance for IFMGA guides and Aspirants working in Europe: Please contact the AMGA before November if you are interested in more information. We are working on organizing those who are seeking liability insurance overseas.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and coming fall! - Simon

### 2005 Updated Program Schedule: (2006 schedule is posted on the AMGA website at: [www.amga.com](http://www.amga.com))

#### Rock Programs:

R9 - Rock Instructors Course  
N. Conway, NH 8/29 – 9/7 **2 avail spots**

R10 - Rock Instructors Exam  
N. Conway, NH 9/12 – 17 **FULL**

R11 - Adv. Rock Guides Course  
Black Canyon, CO 9/12 – 21 **2 avail spots**

R12 - Rock Instructor Exam  
Boulder, CO 9/26 – 10/1 **FULL**

R13 - Rock Guides Exam  
Red Rock, NV 10/4-9 **FULL**

R14 - Adv. Rock Guides Course  
Red Rock, NV 10/10-19 **FULL**

R14.5 - Rock Guide Exam  
Red Rock, NV 10/11-16 **FULL**

R15 - Rock Instructor Exam  
N. Carolina, 10/29-11/3 **2 avail spots**

#### Alpine Programs:

A4 - Adv. Alpine Guides Course  
Bugs / Ice Fields CAN 9/9-19 **1 avail spot**

A5 - Alpine Guides Exam  
Bugs / Ice Fields CAN 9/9-18 **FULL**

A6 - Alpine Guides Course  
RMNP, CO 9/12 - 21 **FULL**

A7 - Alpine Guides Exam  
Cascades, WA 9/20 – 29 **FULL**

A8 - Adv. Alpine Guide Course  
Cascades, WA 9/20– 30 **FULL**

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Supporting Sponsors give between \$500 and \$1499

Contact the AMGA office to learn how you can become a Contributor.

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Marmot  
The North Face  
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Nike ACG  
Patagonia  
Petzl  
Rock and Ice Magazine  
Jon & Bridget Winsor  
Wells Fargo

### **Patron:**

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Backcountry Access, Inc.  
Backcountry Magazine  
Boulder Rock Club  
La Sportiva  
Lowe Alpine Systems / Asolo

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Protech  
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Sterling Rope Company  
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Tecnica  
Trango  
Vasque Footwear  
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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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"The AMGA is YOUR Guide Association"



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