

Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

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Vol. XXIV No. 1 Winter 2005

AMGA continues to increase the scholarship program in 2005

The American Mountain Guides Association announced for a second year in a row that they are offering nine full tuition scholarships in 2005. Last year the AMGA introduced the Diamond Partnership and The North Face joined at the highest level of AMGA sponsorship to date. In 2005 Marmot has also joined at the Diamond Partnership Level. Both The North Face and Marmot are offering full tuition scholarships along with Arc'teryx, Black Diamond, Malden Mills/Polartec, Mammut, PETZL, Patagonia, and NIKE ACG.

In addition to the corporate scholarships, the AMGA currently has three endowment funds that are used to provide yearly scholarship opportunities. These funds include the: Julie Cheney Culberson Education Fund, Scott Fisher Education Fund, and the Mike Hattrup fund. The Ron Olvesky scholarship is a privately funded scholarship that is granted to one individual each year for the Rock Guides Exam.

This year the AMGA will award over \$17,000 in scholarship funds to worthy applicants. The AMGA would like to thank all of the generous sponsors who provide funding opportunities for our guides. For complete information regarding 2005 scholarships, please visit our website at www.amga.com

PRESIDENT CORNER

"It has been a pleasure to participate in the process that has moved the AMGA to its present status."

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR CORNER

"As we move forward with the education model I discussed in the last newsletter, the Guiding Skills Course has re-emerged at a perfect time."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

"The AMGA has been working on the insurance issue since 2002, and currently has a committee devoted to coming up with solutions for the mountain guiding community."

Technical Director Update by Rob Hess

In the fall newsletter I detailed the changes that will be occurring in the AMGA training programs in the near future. Among those changes was the intended implementation of the "Guiding Skills Course" or what has been referred to as the "Common Elements Course". Though this course is still in the early stages of development, I wanted to take this time to detail the structure, purpose and proposed time line for the implementation of this new course.

It has been widely observed at training courses that participants come to their course with a wide range of skill and experience levels. Thus, much time must be taken from the meat of the course to get participants to a common base level of knowledge. Many participants have found material taught in the entry level courses for each discipline to be overly redundant. In an effort to insure that folks come to the various courses with similar base line skills regardless of the discipline, the Guiding Skills Course (GSC) idea was developed. This course concept has been on the table for some time with the most recent version dating back to the Technical Committee meeting in Yosemite, 2002. In an effort to insure that the AMGA community was ready and able to implement this new idea, the Guiding Skills Course had been put on indefinite hold. During the technical committee meeting this past fall in Moab however, it was resolved to move forward with its implementation.

As we move forward with the education model I discussed in the last newsletter, the Guiding Skills Course has re-emerged at a perfect time. In phasing into a training model in which all participants must attend the complete guides training progression, what better time to integrate the GSC into the formula. (See Fall 2004 newsletter for details)

We are currently reworking the curriculum and structure of the Yosemite version of the Guiding

(continued on page 4)



AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-2006

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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.

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

Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published May 20, 2005.

Deadline for all submissions, including advertising is January 21, 2005.

Deadlines for 2005 issue 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. He has worked for the Colorado Mountain School as Office Manager, Expedition Coordinator, and Guide.

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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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

by Michael Alkaitis, Executive Director

The Mountain Guiding industry in America is facing an insurance crisis that is threatening to force many small and large guiding services out of business. Since 9-11-2001 the industry has seen premium increases from 10%-400%. The quotes from the insurance companies are coming in from \$20,000 for a small business to \$100,000 for a medium sized business. This crisis is known as a hard insurance market and is having a dramatic affect on the guides who don't have a large profit margin to begin with.

According to an agent familiar with liability insurance providers, there are currently only two companies willing to accept new applications for commercial climbing policies. With only two providers they can obviously ask for whatever price they see fit. At the moment that price is quite steep.

There are a number of challenges this price increase creates for mountain guides. The largest is the fact that many land managers mandate what price guides can charge for their services. If the guides are allowed to charge higher prices, then they must try to explain this to their clients. It is not easy to explain you are making less money, while charging them more.

The AMGA has been working on this issue since 2002 and currently has a committee devoted to coming up with solutions for the mountain guiding community. One of the solutions being investigated is "Can the AMGA help set up an association designed to provide liability insurance for its members?" This association would start with a certain amount of capitol to be invested with a larger parent bank. At the moment this concept is still in its infancy and we are looking for people who are familiar with the insurance industry who would be willing to help.

The AMGA Board of Directors meeting on February 2nd 2005 included the insurance crisis as the major agenda item. The national office will be able to answer questions and provide up dates after this meeting. If you have any questions or would like to participate in the insurance committee please contact Mike Alkaitis the AMGA Executive Director at 303-271-0984 or mike@amga.com.



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Dick Jackson, AMGA President

As I approach the 'home stretch' to my term as your President of the AMGA, I can easily reflect on the past few years with an appreciation for the positive changes along with being incredibly optimistic for the path we're on.

The recent annual meeting in Moab was a dramatic step forward as our consistent momentum continued to convince all who attended that the AMGA has finally turned the corner to reach a very high level of professionalism and camaraderie. Two specific events combined to confirm the positive direction that the AMGA is on....first was the Awards Presentation followed by the Guides Olympics on the closing day. It was quite moving and gratifying to participate with and feel the positive energy throughout the long weekend.

I have a broad perspective in regards to how the AMGA and its members both interact and represent American mountain guiding relative to the European model. I am so impressed with the uniqueness and maturity displayed during the events and meetings hosted in Moab. Reluctant to claim credit for the attainment of any long-range goals, I am proud to acknowledge the obvious positive direction the AMGA has taken. All of our members should become even more involved....courses and exams are filling beyond past expectations. This 'aire' of inclusive has also created a challenge that the AMGA has actually looked forward to over the past 25 years. As we all know, it is the "journey" that really counts, and I truly believe that we are on the right path to accomplish the goals to place the AMGA with recognition from both the public sector and federal agencies.

It has been a pleasure to participate in the process that has moved the AMGA to its present status.

Best, as always!

Dick Jackson
AMGA President



(continued from page 1)

Skills Course and hope to have our first draft out by June, 2005. The course curriculum will be designed to incorporate baseline aspects of all three disciplines. With this comes the restructure of all the entry level courses in each discipline due to the fact that a significant portion of the curriculum taught on these entry level courses will be moved into the GSC. We hope to hold an instructor training session just before the 2005 Annual Meeting and a pilot course ready to be run just after the annual meeting. If all goes as expected we will have the GSC listed with the release of the 2006 Program Schedule in September 2005.

We all understand that this will put additional demands and expense on the aspiring guide. With this in mind we are looking at ways to make this as inexpensive and user friendly

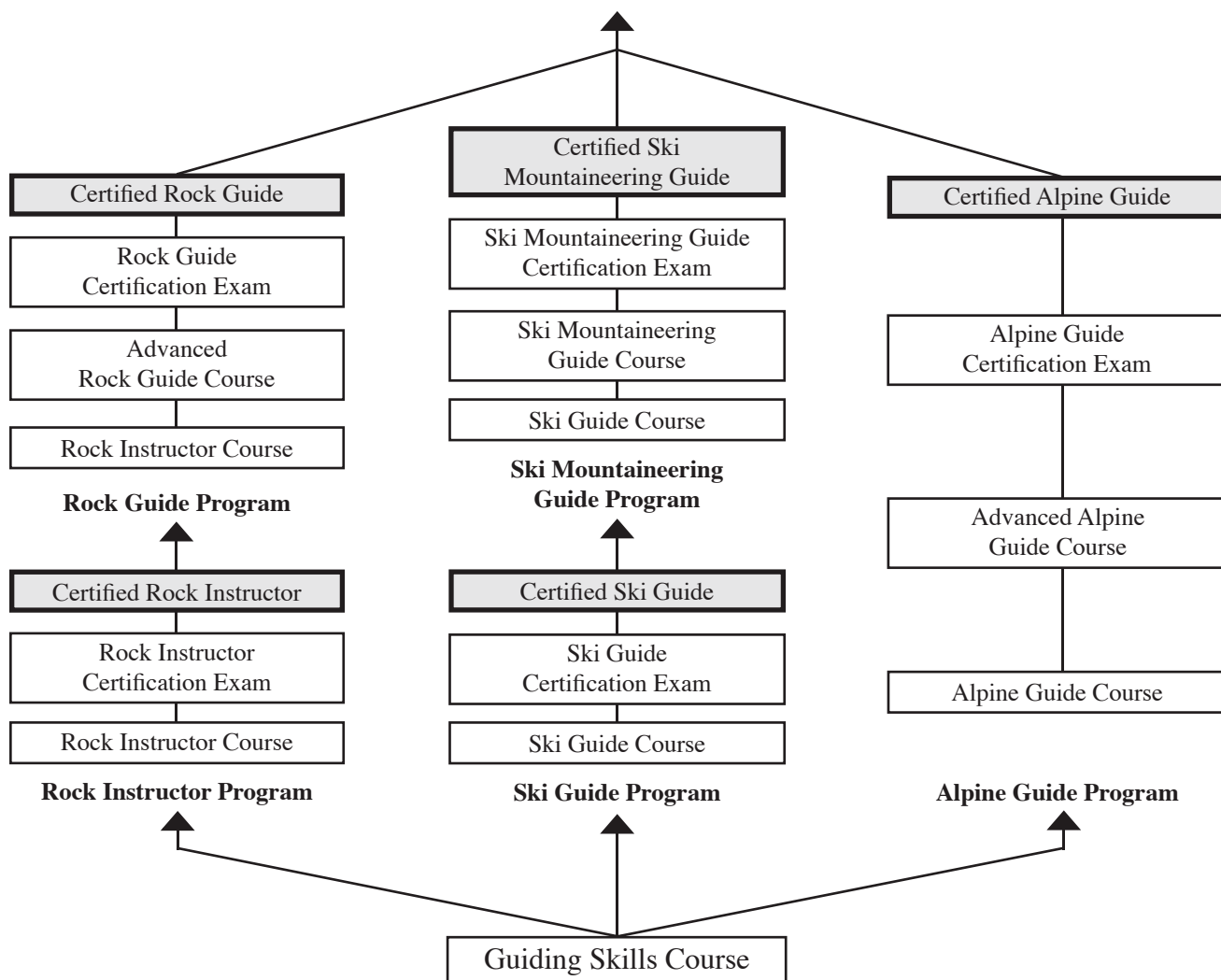
as possible. Piggy backing the GSC courses with our Rock Instructor Courses or Alpine Guides Courses is one obvious way to make this easier on participants. Also, running the course at a higher student to instructor ratio will reduce staffing costs and the overall cost of the course. We are even looking at shortening the overall length of the RIC and AGC. The bottom line is that this restructure will increase time and expense for our aspiring guides. As I stated in the past newsletter, this training model is in my opinion a very positive step. Investment on the front side will only insure that one does well on the exams but more importantly insure that participants have received the best education available anywhere.

The Guiding Skills Course is expected to be available to anyone; no guiding prerequisites will be expected. Individuals interested in the GSC will need to be experienced climbers thinking of pursuing a career in mountain guiding. The only caveat being that if individuals enroll in both a GSC and an entry level course piggy backing the GSC, they will be expected to meet the prerequisites of the entry level course occurring after the GSC. The course is expected to be 5 days in length.

I have included a flow chart showing the path to full certification based on the implementation of the Guiding Skills Course. I hope this helps you, the community of AMGA members, better understand the vision of the AMGA and the reasons for the evolution of our training programs.

Cheers,
Rob Hess
AMGA Technical Director

IFMGA Mountain Guide



Winter Guides Gear

In the last issue we reviewed the most aggressive AT boots on the market. In this issue we look into the lightest AT boots that still give you the performance you demand. Luckily for us, there are some incredible boots on the market and the European influence is coming to America. We also review three AT bindings that fit your need for reliable transportation in the backcountry and a bit of area skiing. Lastly, we review a new headlamp from Princeton Tec. We hope you enjoy the reviews as much as we enjoyed testing this great gear.



Fritschi Explore Binding:

The Fritschi Explore binding, is an updated version of the Diamir Titanal 3 binding used for years by guides for its ease of use. The updates for the Explore are lighter weight (3 lb 13 oz per pair), a new heel piece to allow for easier use with your ski pole, and a new friction plate to allow for more consistent release with an AT boot. The Explore is a fully adjustable binding for any boot, and has a DIN setting up to 10.

The review team enjoyed the familiar qualities of the binding and thought the updates were well thought out. This binding is the standard for step in, step out bindings for backcountry use and some area skiing. If you are interested in this product and would like more information please go to www.bdel.com or contact TJ at 801-278-5552.



Silvretta Pure Binding:

The Silvretta Pure binding is new to the American market this year after a successful debut in Europe last year. It is a well thought out binding, lightweight (2 lb 9 oz per pair), durable, and easy to use. The carbon fiber makes this binding lightweight and seems to hold up to punishment. The pivot point is 30mm behind the boot toe, enabling for an easy stride and kick turns. The heel piece has been beefed up for the American market and has 3 positions for skinning and can be adjusted with your ski pole. The Pure is a releasable, step in, step out binding that comes with brakes.

The review team found this to be the favorite backcountry binding because of its weight and ease. The Pure is sure to make life light if you like the ease of step in, step out bindings. For more information please go to www.garmontusa.com or call customer service at 802-658-8426.



BCA Naxo Mountain Binding:

The Naxo was introduced in America last year and has some significant improvements for 2005. The heel and toe piece have been beefed up for a truly bombproof binding (4 lb 11 oz per pair). The Swiss-made Naxo still features a true alpine style toe piece, a triple pivot virtual rotation system for a natural stride when skinning, and a DIN setting up to 12. The Naxo is a step in step out binding that fits all AT and downhill boots. The heel piece has 3 positions for skinning and can be adjusted using your ski pole.

The review team loved this binding for the hard charger who was looking for the alpine binding to take into the backcountry. You can adjust the length and release adjustments by hand, and comes with a limited 2 year warranty. For more information please go to www.backcountryaccess.com or call 303-417-1345.

Winter Guides Gear (continued)



Scarpa F-1

The F1 is a new AT boot design from Scarpa with randonnee racing as the target audience. This incredible boot also works wonders for the ski guide looking to lighten their load and still have enough performance. One of the lightest (5lb 15 oz, size 26 pair) AT boots and created specifically for a Dynafit binding, the F1 is also the first AT boot to have a flexible toe for a longer, natural and more efficient stride while touring. The downside of this is it is not recommended for traditional AT bindings. In a pinch you can fit the boot into a traditional AT binding, but it is not recommended. The dual cuff and forward lean lock make the transition from hiking to skiing easy and allows for incredible flex in the hiking mode. The boot comes with a thermo-mold liner that needs to be custom fit to your foot.

We skied this boot on everything from 20 degree powder slopes to 45 degree chutes and found the boot to be a great all around performer. The boot performs best on the more gentle angles, but can survive in tough conditions. The boot fits a medium to low volume foot for best results. If you love the Dynafit system, you will love this boot. For more information on this and other Scarpa boots go to www.bdel.com or contact TJ at 801-278-5552.



Garmont Mega Lite G-Fit

The new Mega Lite G-Fit from Garmont does it all. This is the competition in Europe for the Scarpa F1 and comes with 3 buckles at an incredibly light-weight (6 lbs 8 oz, size 27.5 pair). The Mega Lite fits both the Dynafit binding system as well as the standard AT bindings. The easy to use walking and skiing modes make it quick and efficient to transfer between the two settings. The boot comes with a thermo-mold G-Fit liner that needs to be custom fit to your foot. This boot was designed for the ski mountaineer who wants one boot to satisfy all of their needs.

As with the F1 we skied this boot on everything from 20 degree powder slopes to 45 degree chutes and found the boot to be a great all around performer. The boot performs best on the more gentle angles, but can survive in tough conditions. The boot shell fits a medium to high volume foot for best results. If you are looking for the one boot quiver, for all bindings, we recommend the Mega Lite G-Fit. For more information on this and other Garmont products go to www.garmontusa.com or call customer service at 802-658-8426.



The Princeton Tec Corona headlamp is an excellent choice for those outdoor enthusiasts looking for bright, dependable, and clean area/flood lighting. It's 8 LED's are bright enough to attract attention from long distances, and are efficient enough so that you don't have to change batteries every month. The super durable LED's also produce an even field of lighting without emitting any dark spots in your field of view.

With lighting choices of 8, 5, 3 and 1 LED operating options (and dim modes for each), the Corona is a very versatile headlamp. Having 8 LED's inspires confidence when racing through your city streets on a bicycle, and 1 led is perfect for reading books in a tent, especially because the head assembly pivots. The Corona is easy to adjust and comfortable to wear, even with the 3 AA battery pack at the rear.

The LED's perform wonderfully in cold weather, although the two operating buttons are a little difficult to press with gloves on. All told an excellent choice for area lighting. Check out this and other great Princeton Tec headlamps at www.ptsportlights.com/ or call Dave at 800-257-9080.

Princeton Tec - Corona



Guide Profile: Meet Keith Garvey

Interview By: Mike Alkaitis

Keith Garvey is certified as both an Alpine and Rock Guide through the AMGA and is currently a guide instructor in the rock discipline. He has been guiding at Colorado Mountain School since 1996. Keith enjoys a diversity of climbing challenges: from big-wall rock routes, to difficult mixed climbs, and high altitude endeavors. These pursuits have taken him climbing throughout the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Australia and South America. Keith has established several first ascents with clients, guided multiple ascents of the Diamond (at 14,000') up to grade 5.11, and lead expeditions to Nepal, Aconcagua, Bolivia and Ecuador. Keith holds a BA in Parks, Recreation and Tourism. He speaks Spanish and Kiwi. Guides bio provided by Colorado Mountain School.

What interested you in guiding?

I wanted to learn as much as possible about being in the mountains and being safe. I wanted to learn from the best in the business and share in the unique experience of leading people into the unknown. Opening people's eyes to the adventures in the mountains and seeing the smiles these experiences created are what keep me in this business.

Currently the greatest pleasure comes from bringing other guide's level of expertise up and in taking advanced clients to the next level. I love to guide in the three disciplines because of the diversity of the seasons and the challenges brought by each.

Why did you pursue AMGA certification?

I wanted to be the best guide possible and the AMGA offered internationally recognized training. After starting the certification process I realized the potential to use my trade throughout the world as a recognized certified mountain guide. Everyone should constantly be learning and going through the AMGA certification process is a great way to keep learning and improving.

Tell me about breaking your back in La Grave last year and what it taught you?

I was working in La Grave, France and training for my AMGA ski mountaineering exam the following spring. I had the day off from guiding and decided to pursue high speed big air. The results were not what I was expecting: a slip on the ice, air, compression of my L1 and 4 months of recovery. The biggest thing I learned was no matter what kind of terrain, always take your time, look ahead and think of the consequences of falling. I am psyched to return to La Grave this year and send a misty flip off the same serac.

What book are you currently reading?

It's a shame to say I am not currently reading a book. I recently completed the Hobbit and loved reading about Bilbo's adventures.

What music are you listening too?

Jurassic 5. Hip Hop, Rap that was introduced to me by Evan on the last Advanced Rock Guides Course in Red Rocks. It is nice to diversify the music I listen too.

What is your favorite piece of gear?

K2 Apache Chiefs, even though I have not skied on them yet, I know they are going to be the bomb! I'm a sucker for new gear. This past season teaching rock courses, the La Sportiva Katana were great all around comfortable shoes that performed well.

Any last thoughts?

To those who are wavering on AMGA/IFMGA certifications, I would recommend pursuing these programs to raise the guiding standard in the United States and help grow the profession of mountain guiding. The AMGA is growing, moving in a great direction, and no one should be left behind.



MEMBERSHIP CORNER

by Nancy Lea

Greetings from the AMGA office! The winter season is underway and it has been a whirlwind of courses, scholarships, board meetings, and the Winter OR Show. This year looks to be a promising one in terms of corporate partnerships. We have some potential partnerships on the horizon that could mean more benefits for AMGA members. We will update you on those developments in future e-news and newsletters.

Thank you to the following sponsors and individuals:

*We would like to say thank you to The North Face for providing our recently certified Alpine Guides with jackets, pants, and base layer apparel. This benefit is part of the Diamond Sponsorship that TNF shares with the AMGA.

*Marmot has provided Flurry Jackets for all of our 2004 AMGA Instructors. Marmot is also a Diamond Partner of the AMGA and continues to be a huge supporter of our organization. If you recently received a flurry jacket, I encourage you to write Tom Fritz at Marmot and drop him a line at tfritz@marmot.com

*Mark Houston and Kathy Cosley teamed up with Mountaineer Books to provide Certified Alpine Guides with a copy of their new book: *Alpine Climbing: Techniques to Take You Higher*. The books have been sent out. Thank you to Mark, Kathy and the folks at Mountaineers for providing these great books!

More News:

*Please take note that the next deadline for scholarships is March 1st. The scholarship committee has been reviewing round one and round two scholarships and the results of round one are posted on page 13. Round two results will be announced shortly. As always the pool of applicants is very competitive. However, don't be discouraged if you did not receive a scholarship in round one. Some of our recipients have applied repeatedly before being granted a scholarship.

*We are always looking for articles, letters to the editor, and technical tips for our newsletters and E-News. If you would like to contribute material please contact Brandon Walton, Program Assistant at Brandon@amga.com.

Have a safe and happy winter season and look for more updates in the spring!

New AMGA Certified Guide Pins!

We have added additional pins to our line of AMGA Merchandise. You can now order pins if you are a Certified Rock Guide, Certified Alpine Guide, or Certified Ski Mountaineering Guide. They are available for \$15.00 each. These pins are another way to advertise your certification credential. To order please submit the AMGA Merchandise Form available on page 11 of this newsletter or call the AMGA office at 303-271-0984 to order via credit card.



AMGA MEMBERSHIP FORM

**INDIVIDUAL, ASSOCIATE AND **STUDENT ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION*



Name _____ Date of birth _____ Gender _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 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)

Circle the type of membership you are applying for.

Individual Member** (\$115 check or money order) **Associate Member** (\$60 check or money order) *Student Associate Member** (\$40 check or money order)

*Include resumes and reference letters only with applications for Individual Membership

- resume of guided climbs, showing a minimum of 40 paid days in the last two years
- resume of personal climbs, showing a minimum of 20 climbs
- at least two letters of reference (from an employer, fellow guide or client)

**Include proof of enrollment with Student Associate Membership

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:

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Expiration Date:

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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 _____

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AMGA MERCHANDISE FORM

ITEM	PRICE	SHIPPING	1ST COLOR	2ND COLOR	SIZE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
AMGA Technical Handbook	\$25 (members) \$75 (non-members)	\$7.50	NA	NA	NA		
AMGA T-Shirt NEW DESIGN (Grey, Natural, Forest Green, Pacific Blue)	\$18 (2/\$34)	\$2.00					
AMGA Women's T-Shirt (New Grass, Smokey Violet, Periwinkle)	\$12 (2/\$20)	\$2.00					
AMGA Embroidered Sweatshirt (Denim, Forest Green)	\$25	\$5.00					
AMGA Sticker/Decal	\$1.50	NA	Blue logo on white	NA	4"x4"		
AMGA Program Catalog	\$5.00	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Brooks Range Mountaineering Equipment Rescue Sled	\$200	\$7.00	NA	NA	NA		
Brooks Range Mountaineering Equipment Shovel	\$18.00	\$5.00	NA	NA	NA		
Brooks Range Mountaineering Equipment Snow Card Set	\$29.00	\$7.00	NA	NA	NA		
AMGA Certified Pins: Rock, Ski Mountaineering, & Alpine Guide Available	\$15.00	NA	NA	NA	NA		

Please send all merchandise orders with check / money order or credit card information to: **AMGA Merchandise PO Box 1739 Boulder, CO 80306**

International Shipping and Handling \$15 minimum

** Colorado residents add 4.75% Sales Tax (.0475)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____



Top Rope Site Manager Course Provider Training 2005

The following dates have been set for TRSM Course Providers. Please contact me if you wish to arrange training at another location/date, or if you are a Certified Rock Instructor or Rock Guide to find out more on becoming a TRSM Course Provider.

Adam Fox

TRSM Program Discipline Coordinator

email: trsmdc@amga.com

phone: 828-692-5326.

TRSM Course Provider Training, 3 days, Joshua Tree, CA March 25-27

TRSM Course Provider Update Workshop, 2 days Joshua Tree, CA March 26-27

TRSM Course*, 4 days Joshua Tree, CA March 28-31

TRSM Exam*, 1 day Joshua Tree, CA April 1

TRSM Course Provider Training, 3 days Brevard, NC, October 17-19

TRSM Course Provider Update Workshop, 2 days Brevard, NC, October 18-19

* This full TRSM Course and Exam are being run by TRSM Trainers Adam Fox and Todd Vogel and will be specifically for TRSM Course Providers and Providers in training to observe and co-teach. Please contact Adam Fox for more details and to enroll.

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NEW CAMALOTS

GO FOR THE GOLD

The gold standard of camming devices just got better.

New Camalots have **redesigned** cam lobes, axles and stems with **weight savings** up to 20% per size. A patent-pending **C-Loop** cable stem provides **tremendous flexibility and strength**.

With less weight and still the **best expansion range** available, go for the gold and reach for the new Camalots at those crux moments.

To get the full beta on the new Camalots, go to:
bdel.com/gear/rock/camalots.php

 **Black Diamond**TM

BlackDiamondEquipment.com
801.278.5533

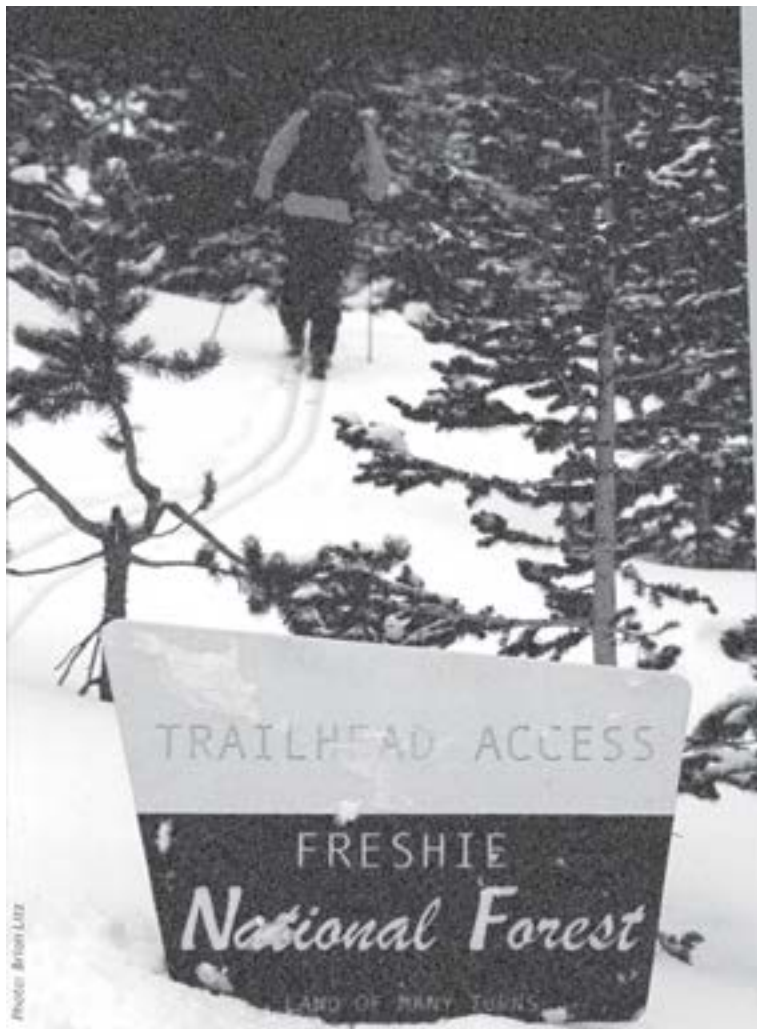
© 2004 BLACK DIAMOND EQUIPMENT

Tech Tip 1-2005: Why bring an ice axe or whippet on a ski tour.

by Mike Alkaitis

On a recent ski tour to the Dragons Tooth Couloir a reminder of why bringing along a whippet or light-weight ice axe occurred. The snow conditions in the couloir were firmer than we had anticipated, and an ice layer had built up where the sun hit the slope. On the climb up, the steps were easy to kick and everyone felt comfortable with the angle and exposure. About two thirds of the way up the couloir, the angle increases to fifty degrees and narrows from one hundred feet wide to twenty feet. A member of our party was not comfortable with skiing the top section and elected to leave his skis at the base of the steep section and climb to the top with the rest of our group.

The summit was pleasant and sunny with a slight breeze to keep us from feeling too sleepy. After eating and taking a few photos we decided to head down. Everyone in the party had a whippet besides the member who was not comfortable skiing the steepest section. We decided to meet where the couloir opened up and ski the rest together from safe zone to safe zone. The couloir was now out of the sun, and the snow was hard pack from top to bottom.



Tracker DTS beacons • BCA shovel/probe systems • Stash packs • Alpine Trekker • Naxo Mountain Bindings • Low-Fat climbing skins



Two of our party skied down to a safe zone off to the side and waited to see our friends ski down to the next safe area. Much to my surprise the lone person without a whippet came falling down the couloir out of control. As he slid by gaining speed we encouraged him to stop and relieve us of the doom we were feeling in the pit of our stomachs. He heeded us not and started to cart wheel down towards a small rock outcropping about one thousand feet below us. To my and my partners amazement he stopped above the outcropping, turned and waived to us.

After skiing down to him I was surprised and filled with joy to find out he had only bruised his ego, scared himself silly, and given himself a good case of snow rash on his face and hands (the fall removed his gloves). He eventually down climbed the rest of the couloir, and lives to tell the tale to his friends and family. The important lesson in all of this is simple. Remember to think of the consequences of falling while skiing and don't let your guard down until you are at the bottom. If our friend had been carrying a whippet or ice axe for self arrest there would be no story to tell. Ski tours should be full of smiles and good times. Next time out, remember to bring all of the essentials and include that whippet or ice axe. They are not very heavy and can make a big difference in your backcountry experience.

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In 2004-05, we're celebrating our tenth year. From the beginning, our approach has been to question conventional thinking, test longstanding assumptions, respect wisdom—and challenge tradition.

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A lot has changed since 1994, but our approach hasn't.



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AMGA Annual Meeting 2005 - Brevard, North Carolina

Following a widely successful Annual Meeting in Moab, Utah, the 2005 AMGA Annual Meeting will be held in Brevard, North Carolina. For those of you who have never been to Brevard - read on! Brevard is located in the "Land of the Waterfalls" near the Pisgah National Forest. This area is the home of 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 has it all!

The Annual Meeting will be centrally located at Brevard College in the center of the small town of Brevard. The 148 year old college offers a variety of interdisciplinary programs including Wilderness Leadership, Experiential Education and Environmental Studies. Brevard is only a 15 minute drive to Looking Glass and Cedar Rock climbing areas and centrally located for any of the other dozen major climbing areas in the vicinity such as Whitesides, Ship Rock, Linville Gorge Areas and Rumbling Bald.

We have had many professionals already sign up to offer a vast array of workshops (small business accounting & software, mental training for climbers, experiential teaching, risk management in guiding, etc). We are currently looking for more professionals that wish to offer a workshop at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Please contact Adam Fox info@foxmountainguides.com if you wish to offer a workshop or have ideas for the Annual Meeting.

Schedule of Events: October 2005

October 13-16 (Thu-Sun)
Wilderness First Responder Recertification

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

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

October 18-19 (Tue-Wed)
TRSM Course 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

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2005 Scholarship Recipients

The AMGA is offering nine full tuition scholarships this year. The first deadline for applications was January 18th. The second deadline was February 4th and the final deadline for submission is March 1, 2005. The scholarship committee is currently reviewing round two scholarships. Announcements for round two and three scholarships will be made in upcoming editions of the E-News.

We would like to thank our corporate sponsors for their generous donations. This funding allows several deserving guides to continue their AMGA education through our training programs and exams.

Congratulations to the following 2005 Scholarship Recipients:

Mike Hattrup Scholarship

\$500 for the Ski Mountaineering
Guides Exam

Larry Goldie

Patagonia Women's Scholarship

Full Tuition for any AMGA program

Olivia Cussen

Malden Mills Scholarship

Full Tuition for any AMGA program

Kent McBride

Arc'teryx Scholarship

Full Tuition for any AMGA
Ski program

Joe Vallone

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Keith Garvey

&

Angela Hawse

For complete information on AMGA
scholarships please visit
www.amga.com



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PROGRAM UPDATE

by Simon Fryer

Providing the highest quality courses and exams has always been at the heart of the AMGA's mission. In 2004 we were challenged with a 40% growth in program enrollment. In response to this growth, Rob Hess, Technical Director, developed a larger instructor pool while maintaining the standard and quality of our programs. This larger instructor pool will allow the AMGA to meet the demands of our program's growing enrollment. Also in response to our program growth, a Program Assistant position was created at the AMGA National Office. Brandon Walton has filled this position to help with the growing tasks and administrative duties associated with increased enrollment. Both steps have proved to be successful, and are now essential as we approach the upcoming 2005 season. In addition, the AMGA has continued to develop ways to address the challenges of subsidizing, and eventually lowering the cost of our programs.

The AMGA is working to lower the financial cost of education with two approaches, scholarships and the program endowment. In 2004 the AMGA offered 13 scholarship grants totaling \$17k. In 2005 scholarship support will grow with the help of Corporate Partners: The North Face and Marmot Mountain Ltd. These partners have pledged to subsidize the Alpine (The North Face) and Ski Mountaineering (Marmot) Exams. Through this support we are able to lower the exam cost for each candidate by \$400. In addition to developing increased scholarship funding, Mike Alkaitis, Executive Director, has worked with a number of board members to create a program endowment. The goal of this endowment is to bring down the cost of each program to \$500 each. In the past two years they have raised \$175k towards this effort.

After attending the Outdoor Retailer Trade Show for the past four years, I am continually impressed by how many people in the outdoor industry know an AMGA certified guide or someone who is involved in our programs. It is great to see the association gaining ground and authenticity in the outdoor industry. I am encouraged to hear companies dedicated to supporting the educational process through continued partnership and scholarship funding. This support is made it possible for many AMGA guides to continue and complete their education.

I'm encouraged by these efforts and the growth of the AMGA programs. I'm looking forward to the coming year and working to make the educational courses and certification exams the standard in American guiding.

AMGA 2005 Program Schedule

Ski Discipline:

S2: Ski Guide Course - FULL

Sierra, CA. March 7-14

S3: Ski Guide Exam

Sierra, CA. March 7-12

S4: Ski Mtn Guide Course - FULL

Cascades, WA. March 20-27

S5: Ski Mtn Guide Exam - FULL

Cascades, WA. April 4-11

S8: Ski Mtn Guide Course - FULL

Valdez, AK. May 2-9

S9: Ski Mtn Guide Exam - FULL

Valdez, AK. May 2-9

Rock Discipline:

R1: Rock Instructor Course - FULL

J-Tree, CA. March 21-30

R2: Rock Instructor Exam - FULL

Red Rock, NV. April 4-9

R3: Rock Guide Exam - FULL

Red Rock, NV. April 11-16

R4: Adv Rock Guide Course - FULL

Red Rock, NV. April 18-27

R5: Rock Instructor Course

N. Carolina April 18-27

Rock Discipline (continued)

R5.5: Adv Rock Guide Course - FULL

Eldo/Black Canyon, CO. May 4-14

R6: Rock Instructor Exam - FULL

Boulder, CO. May 16-21

R7: Rock Instructor Course - FULL

Boulder, CO. May 23-June 1

R8: Rock Instructor Course

Shawngunks, NY May 23-June 1

R9: Rock Instructor Course

N. Conway, NH Aug 29-Sept 7

R10: Rock Instructor Exam

N. Conway, NH Sept 12-17

R11: Adv Rock Guide Course

Eldo/Black Canyon, CO Sept 12-21

R12: Rock Instructor Exam

Boulder, CO Sept 26-Oct 1

R13: Rock Guide Exam

Red Rock, NV Oct 10-15

R14: Adv Rock Guide Course

Red Rock, NV Oct 17-26

R15: Rock Instructor Exam

N. Carolina Oct 26-31

Alpine Discipline

A1: Alpine Guide Course - FULL

RMNP, CO May 2-11

A2: Adv Alpine Guide Course - FULL

Cascades, WA June 1-11

A3: Alpine Guide Course

Tetons, WY June 6-15

A4: Adv Alpine Guide Course

Bugs/Ice Fields Canada Aug 31-Sept 10

A5: Alpine Guide Exam

Bugs/Ice Fields Canada Aug 31-Sept 9

A6: Alpine Guide Course

Sierra, CA Sept 12-21

A7: Alpine Guide Exam

Cascades, WA. Sept 20-29

A8: Adv Alpine Guide Course

Cascades, WA. Sept 20-30



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Please contact Mike Alkaitis if you would like to contribute to the AMGA at mike@amga.com or 303.271.0984

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