

# Mountain Bulletin

A Publication of the American Mountain Guides Association

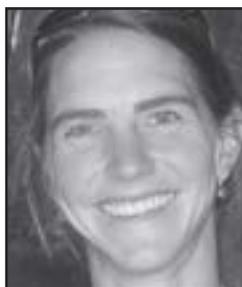
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Vol. XXIV No. 13 Winter 2008

## Letter From the Executive Director

By Betsy Novak



Greetings from Boulder, CO! I hope everyone's New Year is off to a wonderful start and that you have been able to get out and enjoy all that your local playground offers during the winter season. I want to take a moment to thank you for helping make 2007 another successful year for the AMGA. Without your support, the AMGA would not be where it is today and the office and Board of Directors thanks you.

Things are going well at the AMGA headquarters. Thanks to the hard work of an incredible office staff we managed to close out 2007 with an increase in membership, program enrollment, scholarship offerings and corporate donations. Everyone in the office is settling into his or her positions and I am confident that 2008 will be an exciting year of great success. I would like to welcome Ed Crothers as the new AMGA Accreditation Director and Scott Soden as a new Professional Director of the Board. Both of these guys will add tremendous value to our organization.

Lately I have found myself engaging in deep conversations about the AMGA that leave me wondering what our members feel is the most important issue the AMGA should be working on. I feel an informed membership is an empowered membership and being that the AMGA is a membership driven organization I want to make sure you are in the know about what the AMGA has been working on. As the Executive Director my vision for the AMGA is continuously evolving and that vision, which is molded by our mission statement and strategic plan, and guided by the Board of Directors and members, determines what priorities the AMGA will work on.

The AMGA strategic plan represents and determines the overall direction and goals of our organization. It plays a critical part in the day-to-day operations and long-term objectives of the AMGA Office and board of directors. I have summarized what the AMGA has been working on over the past 6-months within the context of our strategic plan to better inform our members.

### What has the AMGA done to "Unify the guiding community in the US and within the AMGA"?

- Improved communications through our new website and forum
- Restructured training programs to better prepare candidates for certification exams
- Adopted a new Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures
- Implemented new curriculum for the Single Pitch Instructor Program
- Developed, in partnership with the Climbing Wall Association, the Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Program
- Broadened our programs by creating the Climbing Instructor Program, which specifically offers training, certification and benefits to climbing instructors in the US.

### What has the AMGA done to "Continue to strengthen the education and testing program"?

- Is in the process of developing a continuing education program for Certified Guides and Climbing Instructors
- Increased program availability by contracting out introductory level AMGA programs
- Provided training for instructors of the ski discipline and conducted a two-day instructor pool training in Yosemite.
- Revised course manuals and exam handbooks to better prepare candidates for programs
- Implemented Aspirant Exam component of Advanced level courses to meet the international requirements for obtaining aspirant status

## President's Corner

Events in the last three months have created some questions, particularly the formation of two rather similar-sounding new organizations—the PCIA (Professional Climbing Instructor's Association) and the PCGI (Professional Climbing Guides' Institute).

## Technical Director Report

The first year of the restructure is complete. The years successes in the training and certification program were very encouraging.

## A Historical Perspective on Avalanche Education

In the past decade, great advancements have been made in the field of avalanche transceiver rescue, most notably the worldwide acceptance of digital technology.

## Life Insurance and Disability Insurance

The AMGA insurance committee approached me in 2006 about putting together an association program for life insurance and disability insurance.

(continued on page 3)



## AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2008

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### Newsletter Deadline

The Mountain Bulletin is Published in February, May, August, November. The next issue of the Mountain Bulletin will be published May 16th, 2008.

Deadlines for all submissions, including advertising are: January 11th (winter issue) April 11th (spring issue) July 11th (summer issue) October 10th (fall issue)

### Newsletter Contributors:

**Katie Kelly** is the AMGA Membership Director.

**Betsy Novak** is the AMGA Executive Director.

**Henry Beyer** is the AMGA Program Director.

**Ed Crothers** is the AMGA Accreditation Director.

**Don Pacher** is the President of Pachner & Associates, LLC.

**Mike Alkaitis** is a Certified Rock Guide and General Manager of Total Climbing in Boulder, CO.

**John Bicknell** is a Certified Rock and Alpine Guide, is current President of the AMGA, and is a Diamond Partner of the organization.

**Rob Hess** serves as the Technical Director of the AMGA. He is IFMGAcertified and is the senior guide/owner of Jackson Hole Mountain Guides.

**Thomas Lund**, Aerospace Sciences, The University of Colorado at Boulder

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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.



(continued from page 1)

- Currently working with the ACMG on rewriting the “Technical Handbook for Professional Guides”
- Developed an Out-Of-Bounds Ski Instructor Program for PSIA Level III Instructors
- Sent representatives to the IFMGA Meetings bi-annually to make sure the AMGA is current with international standards.

#### **What has the AMGA done to “Improve the benefits of membership”?**

*“Improve Access”:*

- The AMGA has been working closely with the American Alpine Club and Access Fund on public policy issues. When issues are dealt with at the federal level the unified voice of three organizations will more likely be heard than the voice of one.
- The AMGA has hired a public policy expert to help us convince land managers that credential based access should be an essential component of the permitting process.

*“Negotiate group discounts”*

- Negotiated deal with Insurance Specialists to provide low rate Accident, Sickness and Disability Insurance and Life Insurance plans to our Certified Members.
- Employees of Accredited Programs are eligible to receive 5% discount on all AMGA programs
- Have been working with our Corporate Partners to improve the Pro-Purchase Program for our Certified and Individual Members.
- The AMGA is proud to have rewarded 40 guides total or partial support from scholarships and or subsidies totaling \$42,250.00 from our sponsors and scholarship funds in 2007.

*“Market Certified Guides, Climbing Instructors and Accredited Programs”*

- Improved Hire a Guide and Accredited Program pages on our website
- The AMGA has recently hired an Accreditation Program Director to oversee and develop a business plan to help grow the Accreditation Program

*“Make the AMGA an information source for members”*

- Created new website and forum page
- Held a successful and well-received Annual Meeting in Yosemite providing free food, drinks, professional development clinics and entertainment for our members.
- Enhanced communication with members via the monthly E-Newsletter and constant contact messaging.

#### **What has the AMGA done to “Continue to develop the long term financial strength and stability of the organization”?**

- Continued to grow our Corporate Partnership Program
- Grown our programs to meet the increasing demand
- Developed fundraising initiatives
- Created a General Memorial Fund
- Continued to grow scholarship and course endowment funds

**2008 has the potential to be a very productive year. With the office staff warming up to their new positions anything is possible. Here is what we have on the radar:**

- Outreach to PSIA, ACA, CWA, AORE, AAC, colleges and universities to jointly create training programs that will reach more climbing and skiing instructors in the US.
- Implement Continuing Education Program
- Content development for and upkeep of the new AMGA Forum
- Increase Corporate Partnerships
- Provide successful and professional training for guides
- Maintain financial stability
- Develop an online database system
- Strongly advocate for credential-based access to all land managers
- Figuring out the best way to provide reciprocity to non US IFMGA Guides
- Finalize web-based Pro-Purchase Program
- Fundraising for the Technical Handbook rewrite
- Figure out best method for growing the AMGA Instructor Pool and expanding development opportunities for AMGA instructors
- Improve Member and Accredited Program benefits
- Grow the amount of Certified Guides, Climbing Instructors and Accredited Programs in the US

I realize this letter reads like an immense to-do list and I apologize for that. My purpose is to give you a sense of what the AMGA does on a daily basis in order to work towards fulfilling our mission and strategic plan. Some of these initiatives seem more important to me than others. But what is most important to me is to hear from you what you feel is of most importance. Are there issues that are crucial to you not included on this list? It is my first year as the Executive Director and there are many of you I have not yet met. I encourage you to please email or call me and let me know what is important to you, as an AMGA member, a guide, a climber and I will continue to do my best to better serve you.

## President's Corner

by John Bicknell



AMGA Strategic Plan, first item:

- Unify the guiding community in the US and within the AMGA.
- Seek to have every working US guide a member of the organization and in support of education, certification, and standards.

I know I always seem to begin these articles by looking at the AMGA's strategic plan, but then, as President, my primary job is to ensure

the organization is focused on its mission and has a plan to achieve it. Events in the last three months have created some questions, particularly the formation of two rather similar-sounding new organizations—the PCIA (Professional Climbing Instructor's Association) and the PCGI (Professional Climbing Guides' Institute). AMGA members have been contacting the office, asking about these organizations and the AMGA's reaction to them.

The greatest concern expressed has been that these new organizations will serve only to confuse the public and there have been some accusations that at least one of the new organizations has been actively misleading individuals about AMGA programs.

It is interesting to me that these organizations have begun at this moment in time, when, on the surface at least, the AMGA has never been more stable and secure. In 2007, the AMGA celebrated 10 years as an IFMGA member; membership increased 19%, course enrollments increased, and the organization is financially sound. At the mountain guide level, I meet very few young guides not interested in seeking AMGA training and certification.

The problem is not at the mountain guide level but elsewhere and I pointed to it in my last article. Fewer than 200 people took IFMGA-track AMGA courses in 2007 while the number of individuals who teach climbing in some capacity in the US is in the tens of thousands. Despite our unique credibility as a training organization in the U.S., the AMGA has an image problem—we are definitely seen as an elite organization with restrictive standards, “serving too few well and too many poorly.” This perception stands behind the creation of both the PCIA and the PCGI—both train only rock climbing guides and instructors, both look primarily to those working in top rope terrain. Both organizations have been founded by a handful of AMGA certified guides who clearly feel the AMGA has not met all their needs or the needs of the general public.

The PCGI argues on its webpage that the public is better served by multiple training organizations, that open competition in the market place will improve the service to all. There's justice in that, I agree the AMGA should look at these new organizations, particularly at the reasons they were formed and adapt and improve accordingly. But in the main I disagree—the greater risk is that the multiplication of professional associations and training programs will confuse and turn off the public.

The AMGA neither endorses nor offers reciprocity with either new organization. There is no way we could—neither really exists as yet so the AMGA would have no way of knowing what it was endorsing.

The AMGA's primary response is to continue with the outreach effort it began several years ago—the revamping of the Single Pitch program to make it more accessible and useful to climbing instructors and more in alignment with international standards (the AMGA has applied for UIAA endorsement for the Single Pitch program and the AAC has supported our application). The Climbing Wall Instructor's pilot program began in 2007 and should reach full status in 2008. Eight CWI courses ran in 2007, enrolling slightly more than 50 students. For a new pilot program, that is great success and indicates the high level of public demand for the training. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Climbing Wall Association and this signals both organizations desire to cooperate and jointly administer the program. Other programs are being developed jointly with both the American Alpine Club and the PSIA. The formation of the PCIA and PCGI indicates that this outreach has been needed and gives us even greater incentive to move forward with these initiatives.

It is far easier to start an organization than to successfully run one. The AMGA will never please everyone in American guiding—as a trainer in my first alpine guides course said to me, “guiding guides is worse than herding cats.” Our job is to be true to our mission and strategic plan—to serve the public and represent (and unify) American climbing guides, to strengthen our training and certification programs, to develop benefits for our members, and to run a stable and sound organization.

Hope you're all out climbing and skiing and having a safe and enjoyable winter season.

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## SIGNAL STRENGTH VERSUS SIGNAL TIMING: Overcoming “signal overlap” in multiple burial searches

Thomas S. Lund  
Aerospace Engineering Sciences  
The University of Colorado at Boulder

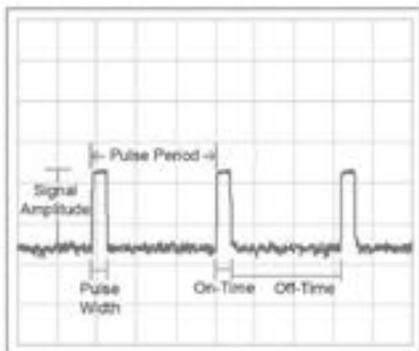


Figure 1. A transceiver’s pulse rate is defined by the width, or on-time, of its transmit pulses and the time, or pulse period, between each one.

### Signal strength vs. signal timing

Traditionally, signals in multiple burials have been isolated using signal strength analysis, either manually (when using analog beacons) or automatically (using most digital beacons). When performed manually, the searcher uses their sensitivity control to isolate the closest transmitter, then locates that victim using a bracketing or induction line search technique. With most digital beacons, this is performed without the use of a sensitivity control: the microprocessor analyzes the signal strength (or “amplitude”) of each signal and leads the searcher to the strongest one first by only displaying the distance and direction of that signal.

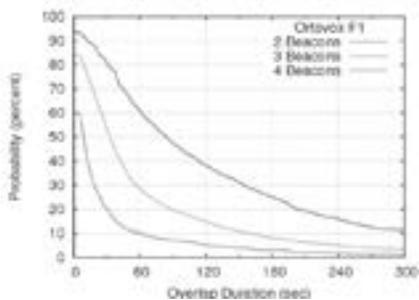
Once the first transmitter is pinpointed, the subsequent victims are located by repeating this procedure after moving away a sufficient distance to cause the receiver to lock onto a different transmitter. This can be done with the Three Circle or Micro Search Strip methods, although the most widely practiced method is simply to turn each transmitter off once the victim is found.

In recent years, some digital beacon manufacturers have developed signal timing analysis to supplement signal strength analysis for multiple burial searches. In this case, the microprocessor measures the time between each pulse and identifies each transmitter by their pulse rate. Once a transmitter is identified, it can be “marked,” or canceled, after it is found. The searcher can then move on to the next signal without performing any special search procedure. While this can work well under ideal conditions, it can break down when the victims’ transmit pulses happen to be on at the same time (overlapped).

When pulses are overlapping, it is difficult for the receiver to distinguish between them, resulting in inaccurate indications on the number of victims. If they’re overlapping when the searcher presses “Mark,” then both signals may be canceled. Once the signals are no longer overlapping, then the signals that were originally marked are often shown again on the beacon display. These issues can make a multiple-beacon search unreliable and more complicated than a traditional search using signal strength analysis.

### Scope of the problem

How likely is signal overlap? To determine this, we developed a computer simulation to predict overlap for various combinations of transmitters. The results show that the probability for complications increases with the number of transmitters, particularly transmitters with long pulse widths, specifically the Ortovox F1--one of the most widely used transceivers in the field. It also increases if the transmitting units are all the same model. Since beacons of the same model all have nearly identical pulse periods, this means their signals will stay overlapped for longer once they become overlapped.



For three-beacon combinations of assorted models, there is a 12 percent chance of encountering an overlap of at least 10 seconds. Field trials show this is long enough to stymie a panicked searcher. For combinations of identical beacons, this number jumps significantly. The probability of overlap for collections of two, three, and four Ortovox F1 beacons are shown in Figure 2. The probability of encountering an overlap lasting one minute or more is 60% in the case of four F1’s.

Figure 2. The problem of signal overlap is severely compounded by increasing numbers of transmitters, especially with long pulse widths.

These findings should be put in context. Recent studies show that close-proximity, multiple-victim transceiver searches are extremely rare, comprising less than one percent of avalanche incidents. As a result, the value of complicated multiple-victim search techniques and “marking” is under debate. Researchers are now advising professional avalanche instructors to focus on single burials, organizing the search, and efficient shoveling.



## Program Director Update

by Henry Beyer



**2007 was a year of many changes at the AMGA**, not the least of which was the restructure of all AMGA Programs. Challenging into advanced level courses was eliminated and the Aspirant Exam, which is now integral to all advanced level courses, was added. Students now must enter the Alpine and Rock Disciplines by first taking the Rock Instructor Course (RIC). The Ski Discipline may be entered by taking the Ski Guide Course (SGC). In order for any student to progress to a discipline specific certification exam he or she must first pass a discipline specific Aspirant Exam.

**Student Course Evaluations** of the new structure overall have been favorable. Students expressed concern about there not being enough delineation between instructional course time and Aspirant Exam time on advanced courses. The critical issue here is when to assess movement skills, as they are prerequisite to the advanced course. Testing students on the first or second day of a ten day course seems to dramatically increase the stress level for students, but is critical for Risk Management. We will continue to address this issue, as well as others, throughout 2008.

**One important change to the Aspirant Exam** that must be high lighted is: if a student fails any part of the Aspirant Exam, they are now only required to retake the part of the exam they failed rather than having to retake the entire Aspirant Exam.

This change brings into to focus the question, **What is the role of the AMGA in properly preparing students for certification exams?** As an organization that provides instruction and certification, the successes and failures of program participants ultimately mirror the successes and failures of the program itself. Whether a student succeeds or fails, the AMGA must reflect on it's contribution to that success or failure. AMGA programs should focus on providing students with all the tools necessary to successfully complete each certification track, so they arrive at the exam prepared, with graduating virtually guaranteed. This may be accomplished in a number of ways, but a few key points I suggest are:

*High quality in-depth debriefings and evaluations by instructors.*

*Better tracking of students as they progress through the programs.*

*Implementing a mentoring program to help participants get instruction outside of a course setting.*

**I would like to add that with any luck we may make it to 2009 with the same Program Director.**

All good things,

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Tested & trusted by AMGA guides.**

**"The Flight 28 pack** is my first choice when guiding multi-pitch rock routes. Fits all my gear inside on the approach and, when compressed, its compact size is easily carried on the climbs." — Art Mooney, AMGA/IFMGA certified guide

**"The Serenity 8.9** — best damn lead line on the market! Light, supple, and durable. This exceptional rope is a guide's dream for working with two clients on long multi-pitch routes. Strong enough to be used as a single line, runs easily through a Reverso, BD Guide, or GiGi, saving your arms on those speedy belays, and less weight to carry on the approach. I have zero hesitation taking a whipper on this rope!" — Carolyn Parker, AMGA Rock Guide

**"The Stratus jacket** is the one piece of clothing I use all the time in the mountains. I use it for insulation on long, cold trail runs and under my Laser Jacket for really frigid climbs, and it packs small enough so I can take it up with me when I climb the Diamond in one long, spring day." — Jack Roberts, AMGA

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## Technical Director Update

by Rob Hess, Technical Director



**General business:** The first year of the re-structure is complete. The years successes in the training and certification program were very encouraging. We now look to the next year to improve and tweak the programs to make them ever better. Strong and effective communication and continuing education will be the themes of this upcoming year in the technical branch.

- In November, Betsy Novack, John Race and I traveled to Canmore, Alberta to attend the ACMG BOD meeting and to attend the annual meeting of the ACMG membership. It is important to note, that I gave a presentation at the annual meeting on the state of access in the U.S. and the challenges we face from our land managers. I believe this was extremely helpful and went a long ways towards the Canadians understanding what we are up against and the efforts we have made towards access for IFMGA guides.

**Training and Certification programs:** Since the last meeting we have run two Ski Guide's Courses. As all may remember, we increased the SGC from 8 to 12 days. This has been a welcomed and necessary change in this program. We feel much more positive about the base line of information given to course participants and are even left wondering how we managed in the 8 day format. The extra days has had little effect on enrollment, as it appears that once the season is complete, we will have run 4 SGC at or near capacity and 1 contract at or near capacity. Some new changes in the ski and general training and certification format are as follows:

- We are running an AMGA/PSIA level 3 instructor, pilot training course in January. This course is 5 days in length. There will be a certification exam for this level, eventually. This program is targeted at PSIA top level instructors (level 3) only and is a credential below the ski mountaineering level. Terrain restrictions will apply.
- On all advanced course/aspirant exams, participants will now be examined on elements that were examined at the certification level. As you know, the elements examined will be technical drills and guiding as-

signments. Once an individual passes all their aspirant exams, they will be awarded an aspirant card. If an individual has taken an advanced course prior to the course/aspirant process, they will be examined on such skills on the certification exam. Those that have passed the aspirant exam will not be required to be examined in such skills on the certification exam. As of 2010, we will phase out the examination of skills on certification exams that are now examined on aspirant exams. After such time, those wanting to take a certification exam without an aspirant exam will need to pass a prescheduled aspirant exam.

**Discipline specific:** Eli Helmuth has stepped down as discipline coordinator in the Alpine discipline. I am in the process of deciding on a new DC. I have interviewed a number of individuals and now need to make my decision. I should have a decision by the BOD meeting.

**Instructor Pool:** In this past year, we utilized our entire discretionary fund for the training and recruitment of the instructor pool. Discretionary funds were used for the following:

- For Discipline coordinators.
- Paid training days for staff gathering before T and C programs scheduled at concurrent times.
- Two day general staff training at the annual meeting, utilizing Colin Zacharius as a guest lecturer on risk management and communication on courses and exams.
- Two day ski instructor pool training session at Snowbird. Completion of SGC teaching primer.

Henry, AMGA's Program Director, and I have resolved to take a more aggressive approach to staff development and evaluation. Henry is now taking all course evaluations by students and summarizing the feedback. This feedback is being forwarded to me so I can better evaluate IP members. I will be looking to DC's for increased involvement here as well.





## AMGA Program for Life Insurance and Disability Insurance

by Don Pachner

The AMGA insurance committee approached me in 2006 about putting together an association program for life insurance and disability insurance. Both life insurance and disability insurance premiums are based on occupation, and mountaineering guides are a difficult class of business (limited availability and expensive) for these insurance coverages.

Working with a benefits specialist, we were able to locate a Third Party Administrator (ISI) willing to negotiate and establish a program for the AMGA at the same low rates being charged to local Chamber of Commerce Members and other equally "low risk" industries.

Coverage is provided through highly regarded, financially strong and stable insurer, Hartford Life Insurance Company through a trust they have set up for this purpose.

In addition, they agreed to pay for all of the mailings and other marketing expenses, which include printing of all brochures, applications, postage, etc. and provide the underwriting and claims support services at no cost to AMGA.

At the recommendation of the AMGA insurance committee, both policies were reviewed by AMGA's attorney, and approved by the AMGA Board of Directors last spring.

### **THE HARTFORD 10 YEAR LEVEL TERM LIFE INSURANCE PLAN** offers all of the following and more:

- Level Issue Age premiums for 10 years
- Guaranteed coverage for 10 years
- Guaranteed offer of coverage at the end of 10 years: either reapply for another 10 year term or enroll for annual renewable term life.

Members and their spouses may apply for benefits ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 (in \$50,000 increments).

Coverage is available through age 64, and is renewable until age 75.

Up to \$100,000 of this coverage is available without a physical examination (known as simplified underwriting), and higher limits are available subject to a physical exam.

### **THE SIMPLIFIED ISSUE 2-2 ACCIDENT & SICKNESS DISABILITY INSURANCE** includes the following:

- Members may apply for up to \$2,500 per month.
- No Medical Exam is required.

The Disability coverage is Guaranteed Renewable, as long as one remains an active Association member, and are under age 70, actively-at-work (except due to disability covered by this policy) the Association participates and the Master policy remains in force. With respect to a spouse, coverage remains in force as stated above as long as he or she remains legally married to the member. Employee coverage remains in force as long as the employee works for an active Association Member.

The insurance market for mountaineering guide liability insurance has softened over the past year. Rates appear to have decreased an

average of 5-10% overall, with larger reductions in some cases where older base rates were being used.

Minimum premiums have not been affected so far. Generally, minimum premiums for the smaller guides and guide services run from around \$650 to \$2,525, depending on the insurance program.

Guide services should generally not accept higher renewal rates, all things being equal. Some other factors that may also affect the renewal premium:

- 1) An increase in gross receipts (many policies use this figure to calculate the premium based on the policy rate per \$1,000 in gross receipts)
- 2) New disciplines offered by the guide service (this may increase the premium)
- 3) New AMGA certifications in the guide's discipline (underwriters generally offer a 5-10% credit for this, depending on the insurance program)
- 4) Contractual issues can increase premium (uncertainty about ability of subcontractors to provide certificate of insurance with limits and coverage same as guide's policy naming guide/guide service as additional insured)
- 5) Certain risk management procedures commonly taught in certification courses can reduce premium.
- 6) Operations and safety manual commonly developed in certification courses is usually required by underwriters and a thorough one can result in a lower rate

Make sure you have a good understanding of what is covered and what your limits and deductible are before purchasing insurance.

Overall, this has been a good year for mountaineering guides in the insurance market place. It appears that the average prices have turned and are starting to trend lower. New insurance markets are appearing, and coverage availability is increasing.



## The Low Down.....

### AMGA Forum is LIVE!

Alright folks, you asked for it and so here it is. The AMGA Forum is live, up on our website, located under resources. Here you will find:

- Announcements and General Information
- AMGA Program Information
- Regional & International Route Conditions and Beta

The information contained on our forum has either been given to us or obtained from sources that we deem reliable. We have no reason to doubt its accuracy, but we do not guarantee it. The prospective user of the information should carefully verify each item and all other information contained or referred to on our resources and forum page.

**\*\* A special thanks goes out to Adam Fox who volunteered many hours to make this resource feasible.**

### AMGA Annual Meeting 2008

Mark your calendars, buy your tickets...we are headed to SMITH ROCK, OREGON

This year it will take 50 burley guides to duct tape Joey Vallone to a tree, the Guide Olympics will be won by the new and improved kick ass office staff and the beer of week will be (hopefully) from Deschutes Brewery!!! Yeah, I know it is wintertime, but the dates have been set for the 2008 Annual Meeting. So, with that said....

- Oct. 15-16 – SPI Program Instructor Training (new instructors)
- Oct. 15-17 – WFR Recertification
- Oct. 16-17 – Leave No Trace Trainer Course
- Oct. 17 – Board of Directors Climbing Day
- Oct. 18 – Technical Committee Meeting
- Oct. 19 – Board of Directors Meeting & Opening Night Event
- Oct. 20 – Professional Development Clinics & Annual Meeting Main Event
- Oct. 21 – SPI Program Director Training (current instructors)
- Oct. 21 – Professional Development Clinics & Guide Olympics
- Oct 22 –23 – Instructor Pool Training

Join us, have some fun, take advantage of the clinics and who knows the fairies may return.

### 2008 AMGA Membership

#### Restructure effective Feb 1, 2008

#### Associate Membership

**Eligibility:** Open to anyone interested in joining a larger community of rock climbers, alpine climbers and skiers interested in education, instruction and guiding in technical mountain terrain.

**Fee:** \$60 (\$40 for students that verify enrollment)

**Benefits:**

- Quarterly AMGA Newsletter the Mountain Bulletin
- Monthly AMGA E-newsletter and E-news updates on important issues in guiding as they arise
- Discounts on AMGA publications
- Invitation to attend the AMGA Annual Conference and professional development clinics
- Eligibility to apply for AMGA climbing instructor level courses

(CWI and SPI) and introduction level guide courses (RIC, AGC and SGC)

#### Individual Membership

**Eligibility:** Any individual who works at least part-time as a professional guide or technical climbing instructor. Applicants must show a minimum 40 paid days in the last two years; resume of personal climbs showing a minimum of 20 climbs and at least two references (employer, fellow guide, or client)

**Fee:** \$100

**Benefits:** Same as Associate Membership plus:

- Eligible to vote in the annual Board of Directors election
- Eligible to run for AMGA Board of Directors
- Pro-Purchase
- Eligibility to apply for AMGA advanced level guide courses and exams (RGC, RIE, RGE, AAGC, AGE, SMGC, SMGE)

#### Certified Individual Membership

(Different fees apply to different certification levels)

#### IFMGA Guide

**Eligibility:** Guides that have passed the AMGA Rock Guide, Ski Mountaineering Guide and Alpine Guide Exams to become IFMGA Certified Guides.

**Fee:** \$125

**Benefits:** Same as Individual Membership plus:

- Pro-Purchase
- Eligibility to apply for an AMGA Logo Use Agreement to use the AMGA logo to promote yourself in advertising and marketing

#### Certified Guide

**Eligibility:** Guides that have passed an AMGA Rock Instructor, Rock Guide, Ski Mountaineering Guide or Alpine Guide Exam.

**Fee:** \$100

**Benefits:** Same as Individual Membership plus:

- Pro-Purchase
- Eligibility to apply for an AMGA Logo Use Agreement to use the AMGA logo to promote yourself in advertising and marketing

#### Certified Single Pitch Instructor

**Eligibility:** Guides that have passed an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Exam

**Fee:** \$60

**Benefits:** Same as Individual Membership plus:

- Pro-Purchase
- Eligibility to apply for an AMGA Logo Use Agreement to use the AMGA logo to promote yourself in advertising and marketing

#### Certified Top Rope Site Manager

**Eligibility:** Guides that have passed an AMGA Top Rope Site Manager Exam

**Fee:** \$60

**Benefits:** Same as Individual Membership plus:

(continued on page 10)



- Pro-Purchase
- Eligibility to apply for an AMGA Logo Use Agreement to use the AMGA logo to promote yourself in advertising and marketing

### Lifetime Membership

**Eligibility:** Any AMGA Certified Guide who wishes to support the organization by donating \$2500 or more.

**Fee:** \$2500

**Benefits:** Same as a Certified Individual Membership plus:

- You will receive an inscribed AMGA pin
- An embroidered AMGA jacket
- Pro Purchase discounts from industry sponsors

### Emeritus Membership

**Eligibility:** A retired guide or instructor of the mountain community that has distinguished themselves through their contributions of significant value to the guiding profession as well as general mountain safety and knowledge.

**Fee:** \$100

**Benefits:** Same as an Individual Membership plus:

- You will receive an inscribed AMGA pin

### Accreditation Membership

**Eligibility:** Accreditation is granted to guiding companies, schools, and programs that meet or exceed the high operational standards required during an extensive safety and business review.

**Fee:** \$1000 application/review fee (every 4 yrs) / \$150 annual membership dues

**Benefits:**

- Full-time guides for Accredited Programs receive a 5% discount on AMGA courses & exams.
- Use of the AMGA Accredited Program logo in marketing/promotional materials
- Making it easier for climbing services to obtain and retain liability insurance
- Increased access to commercial permits on public lands.
- All AMGA Accredited Programs will be listed on the Access Fund website

**Marmot® FOR LIFE**

On June 18, 2007, two-time cancer survivor and mountaineer Sean Swarner reached the summit of 20,320 foot Denali, North America's highest peak, completing his five-year goal of climbing the Seven Summits. Sean's ascent represents an apex in his climbing career, but moreover the event celebrates hope, perseverance and life itself—inspiring us to move beyond what seems impossible.

Photo Sean Swarner Collection

From our extraordinary partners – to the high performance clothing and equipment we design – to the measured steps we're taking toward global sustainability, this is Marmot for Life®.

PEOPLE / PRODUCT / PLANET™

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## Gear Review

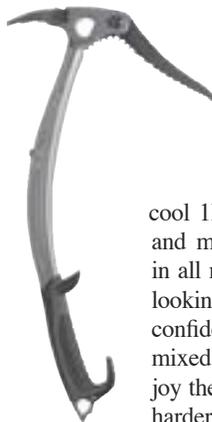
### Black Diamond Ice Axe Review

Black Diamond continues to up the anti in ice climbing tools with the new Cobra and Viper. These tools set the benchmark for high end ice and alpine climbing. Both tools come with the "BD Fang" for leashless ascents, while having the ability to add the new Android Leash (not tested). These tools come in a 50cm length and offer a hammer or adze option. I felt spoiled while testing these tools and hope you are all able to have the opportunity to try them out yourselves.



**Cobra-** The new Cobra comes with the most head clearance of any BD tool, constructed of Carbon Fiber, and looks like the Ferrari of ice tools. Weighing in at 11lbs 5oz it is extremely light and well balanced. The tool excelled on steep ice and alpine terrain with a good overall feel and low vibration. I was a bit concerned with the new outer coating of the Carbon Fiber as it chipped slightly during use, but over time it

has not become worse or shown any weakness. The Cobra was a true joy on true ice covering ground quickly and giving me confidence with every swing.



**Viper-** The new Viper is designed under the same pretence as its predecessor, be the best all around tool possible. The biggest difference is the new hydroformed shaft to increase stiffness and reduce weight. The tool weighs in at a cool 11lbs 6oz for the hammer (1oz more for the adze) and maintains the old Vipers solid feel and reliability in all mountain environments. This is the tool for those looking to have one tool to do it all. The Viper instilled confidence while on ice, in the mountains and traditional mixed climbing. For steep moderate mixed climbs I enjoy the more specialized tools, but the Viper still climbs harder than I do. This is a great tool for guiding and personal use.





## 2008 AMGA Contract Courses

Apply directly to course providers for all Contract Courses

PROVIDER	LOCATION	DATES	COST
<b>CONTRACT ALPINE GUIDE COURSES</b>			
<i>Colorado Mt. School</i>	Boulder, CO	April 19-28	\$2000
<i>Sierra Mountain Guides</i>	Eastern Sierra, CA	June 6-15	\$2000
<i>Colorado Mt. School</i>	Boulder, CO	June 14-23	\$2000
<b>CONTRACT ROCK INSTRUCTOR COURSES</b>			
<i>Colorado Mt. School</i>	Boulder, CO	April 12-22	\$2000
<i>Sierra Mountain Guides</i>	Eastern Sierra, CA	June 20-29	\$2000
<i>Colorado Mt. School</i>	Boulder, CO	August 16-25	\$2000
<i>Sierra Mountain Guides</i>	Eastern Sierra, CA	October 3-12	\$2000
<b>CONTRACT SKI GUIDE COURSES</b>			
<i>Sierra Mountain Guides</i>	Eastern Sierra, CA	February 27-March 9	\$2000
<i>Colorado Mt. School</i> info@totalclimbing.com 800.836.4008x3	<i>Sierra Mountain Guides</i> info@sierramtnguides.com 760.648.1122		

## 2008 Goals For AMGA Accreditation Program

**Ed Crothers – Accreditation Director**

~ Create and maintain accreditation database

~ Improve customer service through

- Timely response to existing members request for information,
- Timely processing of new accreditation applications,
- Timely response to prospective members questions and requests for information.

~ Improved member benefits

- Promote/market accreditation in U.S. publications (Rock and Ice and Climbing magazines,)
- Improve positioning of accredited programs on AMGA website,
- Improve positioning of accredited programs in the Mountain Bulletin,
- Begin to explore other opportunities for member benefits (better access to public lands, lower insurance rates.)

~ Expand membership

- Generate database of the majority of guide services and climbing schools in the U.S.
- Develop annual payment plan to ease the expense of membership for smaller companies,
- Generate interest in accreditation by personally contacting prospective new members,



## Backcountry Skiing: Skills for Ski Touring and Ski Mountaineering

**Attention all Certified Guides...**Limited editions of **Backcountry Skiing: Skills for Ski Touring and Ski Mountaineering**, written by AMGA guides *Martin Volken, Scott Schell, and Margaret Wheeler*, is free to you with \$5 shipping fee while supplies last.

Martin Volken, Scott Schell, and Margaret Wheeler provide skiers with all the tools and knowledge they need to safely and successfully travel in the mountains. The guide features intermediate-to-advanced techniques for ski touring and ski mountaineering, from planning wilderness trips to perfecting turns in rolling terrain and mastering uphill climbing. For those skiers ready for a more technical, high alpine environment, they draw on traditional mountaineering skills, including roped climbing, setting protection anchors, using ice axes, climbing on bare rock, and more.

In addition to mastering techniques, Backcountry Skiing also features information on recent evolutions in ski equipment; avalanche safety tips; a primer on mountain weather and glaciers, trip planning tools, a discussion of emergency situations, nutrition and fitness advice, and winter camping basics. Throughout this guide, a special emphasis is put on being well-informed and making good decisions-whenver you strap on your skis and skins and head out into the backcountry.

**Please contact the office at 303.271.0984** if you are a Certified Guide and interested in receiving a copy of Backcountry Skiing: Skills for Ski Touring and Ski Mountaineering.

### Please Welcome Ed Crothers and Scott Soden



Ed Crothers has worked as a professional mountain guide and outdoor educator for the past 20 years. From 1988 to 1997 he worked in a variety of field and administrative positions with the Colorado Outward School (COBS.) After leaving COBS he guided for the American Alpine Institute in Bellingham, Washington. In 1999 he became a co-owner of the Colorado Mountain School (CMS) in Estes Park, Colorado. For the next 5 years, along with guiding, he managed daily operations at CMS. His duties included permitting, risk management, and equipment management. Ed also designed curricula and taught courses in rope access. His clients included the FBI, Denver International Airport, Routt County SWAT team, among others. He sold his shares of the business in 2004 to his partners and returned to his first love, taking clients into the mountains. He has been a member of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) since 1998 and is a certified Rock Instructor.



Scott Soden, AMGA Board of Director Member

Scott Soden is a Founder and Managing Partner of Alpina Capital, LLC. At Alpina, he directs the merger and acquisition activities in both media and telecommunications arenas. Mr. Soden has 25 years of financial and deal-making experience specializing in transactions with cable television and communications networks, mobile phone and wireless carriers, and consumer print properties. During the past nine years, his skilled representation has led to the completion of more than 70 transactions with an aggregate value of nearly \$2 billion.

Scott is an avid skier, surfer, cyclist and mountain enthusiast. He and his family reside in Denver, though, they spend most weekends in the mountains.

We are excited to have both Ed and Scott join our organization!



## AMGA Membership Form

New Member |  Renewing Member

---

### Personal Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cel Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

---

began guiding professionally the year \_\_\_\_\_ (not required for student and associate members)

guide professionally about \_\_\_\_\_ days per year (not required for student and associate members)

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Check the type of the membership you are applying for:

- Associate Member (\$60)
  - Student Associate Member (\$40) (Include proof of enrollment with Student Associate Membership.)
- Individual Member (\$115) (For individual memberships you must include with application: resumé of guided climbs, minimum 40 paid days in the last two years; resumé of personal climbs; minimum 20 climbs; at least two letters of reference (from an employer, fellow guide, or client).
- IFMGA (\$125)
- Certified Guide (\$100)
- Certified SFI (\$60)
- Certified TRSM (\$60)
- Lifetime Membership (\$2,500)
- Emeritus Membership (\$100)
- Yes, I'd like to make an additional, tax-deductible contribution to further support the AMGA: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail membership application, payment, and receipts (if applicable) to: Membership, 400 Box 1709, Boulder, CO 80502.

### Payment

Name on MC/VISA Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Disclaimer

- I agree to support the high standards of safety and professionalism in mountain guiding and instruction. I understand that the AMGA does not conduct the guiding or the climbing activities and, as such, the AMGA does not endorse and does not guarantee, whether in the U.S. or in other countries, the standards and/or any AMGA member may be subject to the loss of membership, accreditation, or certification. Its, or product or service.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check this box if you would prefer the AMGA not share this information with AMGA Corporate Partners.



# THANKS TO OUR TOP CONTRIBUTORS!

Diamond Sponsors give over \$10,000.

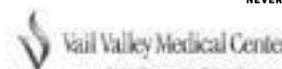
Benefactors give between \$2500 and \$9999.

Patrons give between \$1500 and \$2499.

Supporting Sponsors give between \$500 and \$1499

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

## Diamond:



John and Patty Bicknell

Kyle and Cindy Lefkoff

Gil and Donna VanderHam

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Trango

Arborwear LLC  
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## Patron:

## Supporting:



## MEDIA Partners:

Alpinist Magazine  
Backcountry Magazine  
Rock and Ice Magazine

Please contact Betsy Novak if you would like to contribute to the AMGA at [betsy@amga.com](mailto:betsy@amga.com) or 303.271.0984

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



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