



MOUNTAIN BULLETIN



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Margaret Wheeler

Strategic Planning Part Deux: Governance-O-Rama

January 24th marked the second time this year when the AMGA Board has gathered together outside a regular board meeting to dig into issues that go to the core of our organization. The intensity of these meetings is a tough one to convey. I can use words like: "giant post-it notes" and "SWOT Analysis" and "flip charts"... but somehow I'm afraid that they don't do justice to the real thing. We are talking about hand-waving, paper-wasting, brain-storming fun here, people. These sessions are truly a group effort in problem solving, and therein lies their force.

What makes these sessions such powerful experiences? The idea is this: each one of us has some vision about how to solve a problem. But in the broad perspective, no single one of us gets to see the whole picture; even the clearest vision has blind spots. So we sit in a room together and share visions, work through conflicts, and arrive at consensus. We can't avoid all the blind spots out there, but by working through complex problems together we can see more of the picture than any one of us could see alone.

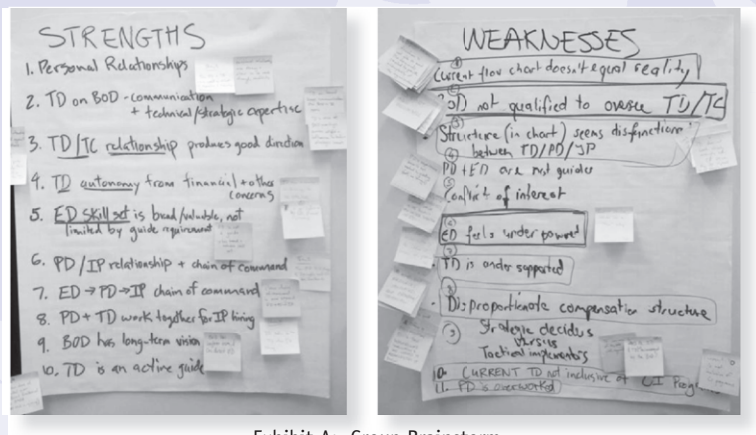


Exhibit A: Group Brainstorm

Our goal as a board was to focus on governance of our organization – the structure and the function of the AMGA. We began our process by doing a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the AMGA's current organizational structure – the board, the office, the technical branch. The group brainstorm looks something like Exhibit A at the left.

With these listed clearly on the wall, we dug into three questions:

1. What should our organizational structure, the chain of command in the AMGA, look like... now and in the future?
2. How can we improve the function of the AMGA Board of Directors, and make better use of the resources that board members bring to the AMGA?
3. Should the TD (continue to have) and the ED (have) a vote on the board

The Question of Structure

The toughest of these questions was the structure of the organization, and we went through about 15 giant post-it notes before we came to a consensus (and Josh pointed out that we could use little notes too). The issue on the table was how to mesh the technical and administrative sides of the AMGA, and how to create a clear working structure for each part of the organization as we grow. From our SWOT analysis it became clear to us that the AMGA is currently functioning well because of the personal relationships within our structure – but that the structure written in our bylaws is not how the organization is actually functioning! Our task in this discussion was to build a structure that will serve the AMGA well in the future; specifically, one that provides a clear vision of each part's role and function, and delineates how they all work together.

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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Photo Credits: Mark Houston, AMGA/IFMGA Certified Guide



ED Corner

by Betsy Novak

I am very proud to announce that the AMGA made it through yet another harsh economic year unscathed. Our operational budget, endowments, and investment accounts remain strong. Our year end financials our solid and well in the black showing a net income that is 12.6% above our budgeted number. This net income can be attributed to above budget gains in program revenue, restricted contributions, unrestricted contributions and membership income, as well as, below budget expenses in outreach, instructor training development and accreditation. Additionally, our investments accrued over \$17,000 in interest while the General Memorial Fund grew by 4% thanks to the continued support of the Doug Parker and Roger Baxter-Jones Memorial Scholarship and contributions from other donors.

We were over budget in program expenses due to increased enrollment and consequential increased instructor wages and overhead expenses. We were fairly confident we would see an increase due to the moratorium that was placed on contract programs but were uncertain to what degree. As a result our program income was also significantly over budget, providing a program income 10% above our 2010 budgeted number. It is important to note that although our Guide Track year-end numbers were above budget, the net income of the Guide Track programs were, for the first time in quite sometime, in the red. While the amount lost was minimal it shows that the AMGA is making a conscious effort to run our programs as affordably and true to cost as we possibly can, without jeopardizing the quality of the programs and while increasing our support and compensation of our dedicated Instructor Pool.

Thirty Guide Track programs ran in 2010, which is 20 less than in 2009, however we saw a 4% increase in enrollment with 227 participants taking a course or exam. Only two of these programs were customized RICs as opposed to 26 in 2009.

In its' first full year of existence, the Climbing Instructor Program (CIP) is proving to be a valuable addition to the AMGA. While both the Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI) and Single Pitch Instructor (SPI) Programs existed prior to formal creation of the CIP, the centralized management of these programs within the AMGA national office has resulted in better day to day management and the ability to plan well into the future.

In 2010 alone the number of CWI Provider Trainers grew from 2 to 8 and the number of programs offered increased by 16%. Improved efforts were made to increase awareness of the CWI Program in the college and university community through a strong presence at the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) annual conference and Wilderness Risk Management Conference.

For the third year in a row, the number of participants taking part in the SPI program has exceeded 500, compared to the TRSM which, at its' peak in 2007, had 413 participants. Five Provider Pool Trainings were run in 2010 resulting in 15 new individuals in various stages of the training process. Currently the Provider Pool consists of 11 Provider Trainers, 37 Providers, 41 Assistant Providers, and 18 Providers in Training.

The Accreditation Program continues to grow and evolve. Currently, there are 31 AMGA Accredited Programs

The IFMGA/AMGA Meeting was a hugely successful event. In the end the AMGA spent \$65,000 to put on the memorable affair and was able to raise sufficient funds, via corporate partner sponsorships, Moab Climbing Trip income and merchandise sales, to fully cover the corollary expenses. The financial support we received from the outdoor industry was reassuring. It is evident the AMGA is a much respected organization and has a mission that is far reaching and appealing throughout the outdoor industry.

Other exciting news as we move forward in 2011, Leigh Goldberg, Access Director was offered and accepted a full-time salaried position. I am very confident that this decision will have an organization-wide positive impact. There are many indirect cost benefits that in my opinion created a strong case for the full-time AD position- brand awareness through marketing and public relations, strengthened relationships with land managers and industry affiliates through outreach and public policy, increased customer satisfaction by providing a meaningful member benefit that directly affects the livelihood of our members and program validation by providing a service that supports the credence of training and certification. There is no doubt in my mind that the AD position will greatly improve AMGA's effectiveness and professionalism.

On the Access Front we collaborated with the Access Fund and the American Alpine Club to oppose the proposed mountaineering fee increases at both Denali and Mount Rainier National Parks. As a result the AMGA has been given the opportunity to deepen its relationship with both park's leadership, enhance our understanding of park management operations and policies, work effectively with each park's concession holders and increase our organization's exposure in DC. The AMGA also submitted scoping comments to Denali National Park and Preserve regarding commercial use allocations, the 1500 climber cap and a proposed CUA pilot program. There will be a second opportunity to submit further comments to Denali Planners Q1 or Q2 following the environmental assessment. The AMGA also plans to provide comment on The National Park Service's updated draft of its wilderness management policies. The update covers a wide range of topics including provisions specific to climbing fixed anchors and commercial services.

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A Different Way To Look At Error Correction

A day of guiding requires thousands of decisions... decisions that may have life and death ramifications. Such as, should I have an Americano or a Latte? Does this shirt go with this helmet? What skis should I use today? You get the picture... in fact you know better than me the innumerable decisions you make during a day of guiding.

Each new decision, has both intended and unintended consequences. No matter how carefully you plan you cannot anticipate everything. A common error is to not consider what other events may occur as a result of some decision.

“It goes without saying that what ever we do, or don’t do, there are multiple consequences.”

Inevitably a mistake or misjudgment will occur and you will need to correct your error. When error correcting, you are not just correcting a misjudgment made in the past you are also influencing future consequences. Thus error correction must not only consider what needs to be done to correct the immediate mistake, but also must consider how your new decision will effect the system—the day of guiding.

I suspect this is where students on AMGA programs who have difficulties error correcting get into trouble. They recognize a mistake and immediately zoom in and focus on how to correct that one mistake without assessing how their solution will affect the system as a whole. They experience... **TUNNEL VISION!**

So what can you do to correct a past mistake and reduce future mistakes, simultaneously?

First, evaluate the decision that led to the initial error. Ask yourself,

*“Is this mistake a consequence of my earlier decision, or is it a symptom of a larger or fundamental misjudgment?
Is there more than one element at work here?”*

Then, move onto making a new decision.

One way to reduce unintended consequences is to stop looking at isolated factors and consider how your actions influence the whole system, that is the whole day of guiding. There are a multitude of variables to consider. Among others, there is “The Error”, there is the guide (in this case you), there is the client, there is the intended route, there are other parties to contend with, there is the environment, and there is the weather.

It is important to think about what variables may change if you alter a factor in a system. “Ask yourself:

“Given these conditions, what likely consequences (wanted and unwanted) will

*the proposed action have on the system, considering all the relevant factors that influence or are a part of the system?
“Will the net result be what I want?”*

The reaction of your client must be taken into consideration as well as the reaction of other parties in the vicinity. Since your interests may conflict with the interest of your client and others, your final decision often depends on what others will do. And what they do may depend on what *they* think you will do, other available choices, etc.

What else needs to be considered?

- Determine how to evaluate your next decision. How will you know if your new decision is moving you closer or away from your desired outcome?
- Brainstorm alternatives as well as the consequences of being wrong.
- Ask yourself, “What is the level of exposure? How serious are the consequences? And what is my experience?”
- Think about probability in terms of outcome: do I understand the forces at play? What are key factors? Are there more opportunities for the same mistake to happen again?

Things to remember?

- Accidents happen if they have an opportunity to happen
- “The more opportunities (wanted or unwanted outcomes) an event has to happen in relation to what can happen (all possible outcomes), the more likely it is to occur.”
- “Assume that errors/accidents will happen and prepare for when people and technology don’t work as planned. Systems should be planned to eliminate the probability of bad events or limit their consequences if they happen.”
- It is human nature to overvalue the positive and undervalue the negative. In other words you will tend to overestimate the positive attributes of a given course of action and down play the negative ones.
- Err on the side of caution for both known and unknown risk factors.

Above all else keep this in mind:

“Not matter how long you’ve been traveling down the wrong path, turn back.”

–TURKISH PROVERB

(I want acknowledge Peter Bevelin and his book *Seeking Wisdom – From Darwin To Munger* for providing the much of the content for this article.)



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THE ABC'S (and D) OF DIGGING: AVALANCHE SHOVELING DISTILLED TO THE BASICS

by Bruce Edgerly

It's not sexy, but it sure saves lives. Over the past four years, shoveling has become an increasingly important aspect of recreational and professional avalanche courses. Real incidents have occurred in which shoveling strategy made the difference between life and death (Weselake et. al., 2008). After four years of instruction and feedback, however, it's time to re-evaluate and optimize these techniques so they're easier to teach and execute.

Educators have adopted two prevailing techniques: "strategic shoveling" and the "v-shaped conveyor method," with various hybrid approaches in between. We surveyed 90 North American avalanche instructors to determine how these techniques are working in the field and how they can be refined.

From this survey and subsequent field sessions in Colorado, we distilled these prevailing techniques down to four key concepts that can be remembered with a simple mnemonic: the "ABC's (and D) of Digging." We created a concise educational video illustrating these four basics: preserving the airway (A), using burial (B) depth to define the excavation area, clearing (C) snow to the sides first; and digging (D) snow only once.

Survey Findings

Strategic shoveling and the v-shaped conveyor represent major advancements in avalanche rescue technique. But there is confusion about which methods are appropriate for which user groups and how relevant they are when taught to the wrong audience. For example, a recent survey of 97 avalanche rescue incidents in North America (Edgerly, 2010) indicates that avalanche debris is generally not hardened enough in companion rescues to justify the prying, paddling and shoveling redundancies inherent in the v-shaped conveyor. Likewise, when manpower is unlimited, strategic shoveling does not provide the level of organization that might benefit a large search-and-rescue operation.

To assess the effectiveness of current techniques—and attempt to "bridge the gap" between them—we conducted an on-line survey of North American avalanche educators. We e-mailed the survey to professionals in the AAA and AIARE instructor pools in the U.S. and the AST instructor pool in Canada. We received complete responses from 90 instructors.

The survey led to the following conclusions:

- 1 Strategic shoveling is often considered more appropriate for companion rescues, with limited manpower. It is taught widely in the U.S. and has been adopted by AIARE and the National Ski Patrol for companion rescue. The v-shaped conveyor is often considered more appropriate for larger groups including search-and-rescue teams and mechanized guiding operations, which often have more manpower. It is taught more widely in Canada, where mechanized guiding is more prevalent.
- 2 Many instructors are unclear on the differences between the two techniques: some teach strategic shoveling, but call it the "conveyor method" and vice-versa.
- 3 Some instructors teach both techniques, but customize their instruction to the group being taught.
- 4 Numerous instructors cited an unnecessary dichotomy between the two techniques. They stressed that they share many common elements and these should be reinforced instead of the finer points that distinguish strategic versus v-shaped technique.
- 5 Very few instructors said they do not teach shoveling technique at all. Some instructors thought it was even more important than transceiver instruction, considering the time spent excavating versus beacon searching in real avalanche scenarios.

The ABC'S (and D) of Digging

The conclusions from our survey clearly indicate that the shoveling techniques currently being taught are extremely valuable, but are unnecessarily divergent and possibly more complicated than necessary for the majority of avalanche rescue trainees. We distilled the concepts most widely adopted by the survey respondents down to four key points, easily remembered with the mnemonic, "the ABC's (and D) of Digging."

3.1 A = Airway

- Protect the airway by leaving the probe in the snow at the probe strike and performing the excavation downhill from this point. Do not step in the area uphill of the probe, as this increases the probability of compacting the victim's air pocket.
- Complex terrain features, such as obstacles and terrain traps, may require approaching from other angles.

3.2 B = Burial Depth

- The long axis of the excavation area is defined by the victim's burial depth. The slope angle of the majority of avalanche depositions is in the range of 5 to 15 degrees. Therefore, in the majority of avalanches, the excavation area should extend downhill 1.5 times (1.5x) the burial depth. This can be adjusted to 2x burial depth in flat debris piles or 1x for slope angles greater than 20 degrees.
- In burials less than one meter deep, no offset is necessary, even on horizontal slopes. The priority should be to locate the airway as soon as possible rather than maintaining an adequate excavation size. In such shallow burials, all resources should be focused on digging in the immediate vicinity of the probe—without compromising the victim's airway.
- Burial depths greater than two meters might require moving snow more than once, using an in-line or v-shaped formation.



3.2: The excavation area should extend downhill of the probe about 1.5 times the burial depth, as shown in this photo. However, in shallow burials of less than one meter, all resources should be focused on the immediate vicinity of the probe, to maximize the chance of revealing a body part.



3.3: All excavations should begin by clearing snow to the sides. In this case, three shovelers are available. Two are focused on the probe area with the third taking the “secondary” role 1.5x burial depth downhill.



3.4: Shoveling on one’s knees can be more ergonomic than standing. Once you start bending over too far (shown above), stand in the excavated area and move the snow that was under your knees. This should be cleared to the sides, if possible, to ensure that it’s only moved once.

3.3 C = Clear Snow to the Sides

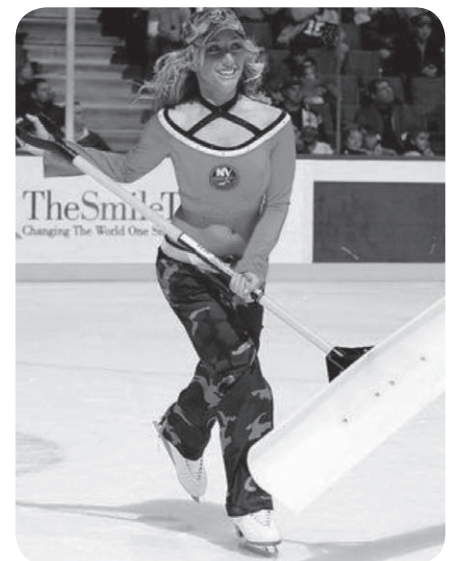
- Always begin the excavation by moving snow to the sides of the hole rather than downhill. This prevents the downhill side from building up and preserves it for snow removal as the hole becomes deeper. By moving snow to the sides, rescuers will minimize the necessity to move snow more than once as the hole gets deeper.
- The width of the hole is defined by the number of rescuers available, not by burial depth. It is always preferable to concentrate resources (at least two shovelers) at the probe strike. This increases the probability of revealing a body part and it prevents the hole from becoming too narrow. However, it is inefficient to excavate wider than six feet (two meters); the probability is low that the victim’s position will be exactly perpendicular to the fall line.
- The hole can be made wider, if necessary, once the victim’s position is established. In this case, only the snow immediately surrounding the victim will need to be moved, not the snow that has been cleared to the sides. This is because the “bridging effect” of work-hardened snow will prevent the undermined area from collapsing.

3.4 D = Dig Only Once!

- Unless manpower is unlimited, it is inefficient to move snow more than once. Only in the most hardened debris—and the deepest burials—should a block of snow be handled more than once or by more than one person.

Conclusion

By teaching shoveling strategy and technique in their courses, avalanche educators have made great strides in improving the odds of survival in real avalanche scenarios. Four years of instruction and feedback, however, have shown that the two prevailing techniques being taught are unnecessarily divergent and complicated. By distilling the most important concepts down to the fundamental ABC’s—and clearly illustrating them with a downloadable video—we believe educators will teach shoveling technique more effectively and that more lives will be saved into the future. Shoveling snow might not be sexy, but saving lives sure is!



Wait a minute, who said shoveling isn’t sexy?

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by Ed Crothers,
AMGA Climbing
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Do You Rent Them Ice Pick Things?

How

many times have you heard this or some variation of this question? This article is intended for anyone who rents climbing or skiing gear to clients or is involved in the process of managing and distributing rental equipment. **DISCLAIMER:**

Some legal concepts related to release of liability and product liability will be explored. Both of these are complex legal issues involving laws that vary from state to state. The intent of the article is to raise awareness and stimulate thought, not provide legal advice. For legal advice seek out an attorney with experience in outdoor recreation law in the state your program is incorporated in.

First question is why does your program rent gear? Some answers I commonly hear are that “it is a service to clients;” it is a good revenue stream;” “it is part of an agreement with a corporate partner.” All of these are good reasons, but there are risks associated with this. Gear failure or claims of improper training in the use of the gear are two areas of concern. Also, there are differences between renting gear to clients and renting gear to the general public.

When renting to clients, mitigating the risks posed above is fairly straightforward. Things to do include following the manufacturers recommendations for use; posting the product information that came with the gear in a binder that is available to staff and customers; having a retirement policy and method for tracking use and age of gear; training staff in the use and inspection of gear; regularly inspecting gear and repairing as necessary. Procedures and guidelines should be documented in staff or operation manuals. If the client is enrolled in one of your programs, it is reasonable to expect that your staff will be instructing them in the proper use of the equipment they will be renting. Also important is the use of release of liability language on the rental form or included in the general release/ acknowledgement of risk form the clients will be signing. Courts tend to hold the provider of equipment to the public to a high standard and will closely scrutinize the language used in the waiver; seek professional help when crafting this waiver.

Renting equipment to non-clients is a whole other story. Picture this: a person walks in off the street wanting to rent an ice axe. This person tells your employee that they are not really sure how to use it. In the name of good customer service, your employee discusses and demonstrates the various ways to use an ice axe. The customer then goes out and is seriously injured when they could not self-arrest, names your business in a lawsuit claiming improper instruction in the use of an ice axe, and wins a judgment against you. Far fetched? Not really, it has happen in the outdoor adventure/recreation world. How should renting gear to people who are not enrolled in one of your programs be approached? The easiest way to protect yourself is to not rent gear to the general public. If, for whatever reason, you choose to rent gear to customers other than your clients, the first step would be to utilize the recommendations presented in the preceding paragraph. Another important step is to train your staff to always assume the customer has a basic level of knowledge as to the proper use of the



equipment they would like to rent; think “don’t ask, don’t tell.” A tenant of product liability law is that the customer has a duty to not misuse a product and is required to have appropriate skill and training before using the product. This protection can go out the window if staff knowingly rents gear to a customer who clearly has no idea how to use it or gives a quick “how to” lesson in the shop. Also include language in the rental equipment liability release that states the person renting the gear either understands how to use it and will be seeking proper training in its use.

Obviously, it cannot be assumed that even an experienced user knows all the ins and outs of specialized equipment. An extensive list of equipment that would fall in this gray zone can be easily generated, but looking at each is beyond the scope of this article. The guiding principle should be “what would a reasonable consumer expect?” Apply that question to the gear you rent and come up with written procedures and guidelines you and your staff can refer to when dealing with those situations that are likely to fall in that gray zone. It is far better to have a guideline in place than have to improvise in the moment.

As is so often the case in our business, there is ongoing tension between “protection and production.” An important concept to keep in mind is that risk management does not mean risk elimination; that is not possible in our line of work. When it comes to balancing protection and production, simply run a professional business. Ask yourself how a prudent and reasonable person would run a guide service or climbing school. Also, ask what would a reasonable client expect from your company. Take the time to regularly review company procedures and guidelines; look to see how other organizations do business and manage risk. When in doubt, get legal advice from an attorney and guidance from your general liability insurance provider. In the short term, seeking legal advice appears to be expensive, but if the advice prevents a single lawsuit, the investment will have paid huge dividends.

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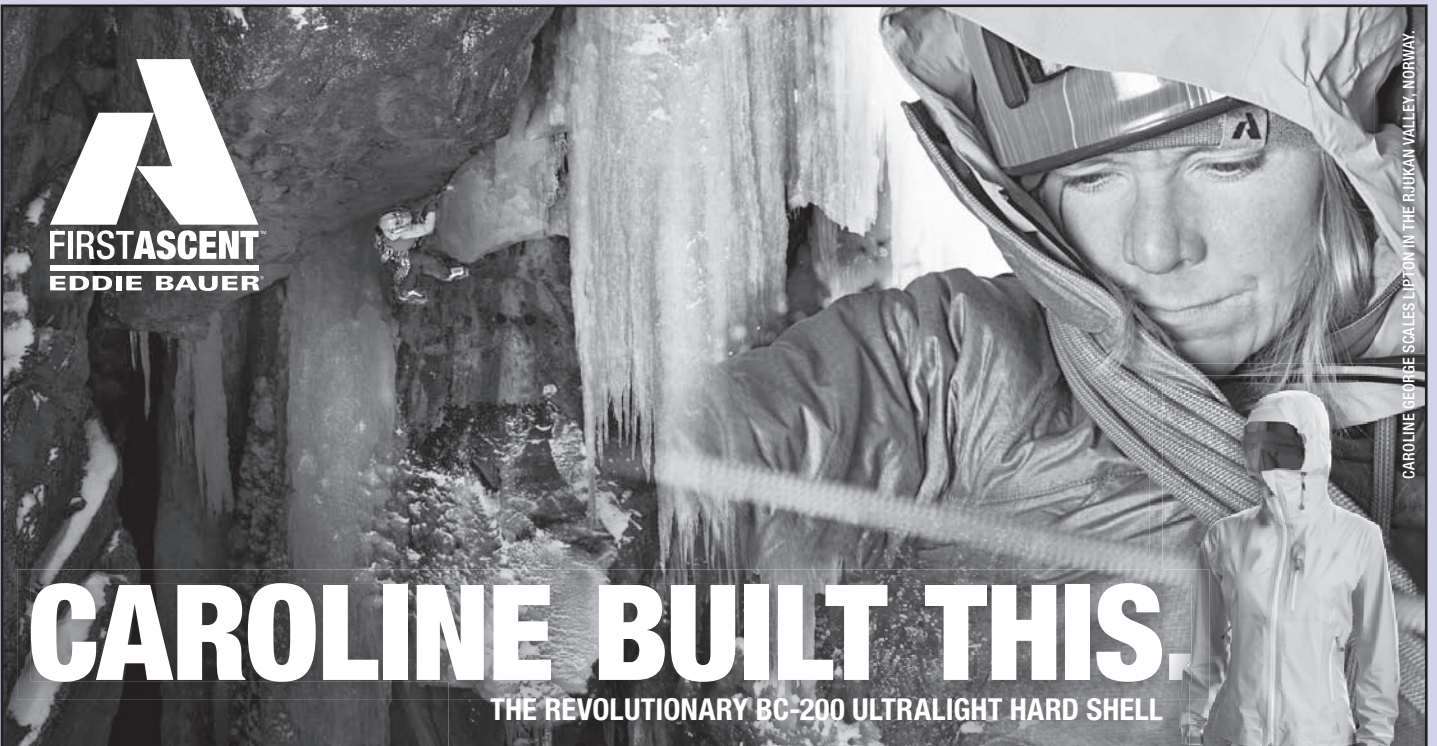
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ACCESS DIRECTOR UPDATE

by Leigh Goldberg



Some of you are probably familiar with the famous Eldorado Canyon route on the Bastille Wall called Outer Space first climbed by Layton Kor and Steve Komito in 1961. To pass the time while waiting for his partner to finish the last pitch, Kor took out his hammer and piton and carved his initials into the sandstone.

Fast forward fifty years to today. The National Park Service recently released its long awaited Draft Director's Order #41, which outlines federal guidance on allowance and management of fixed anchors in designated wilderness. The AMGA is working with other climbing stakeholders to formulate our comments to this new policy.

Back to pioneer Layton Kor. His "LK" initials, which can still be viewed today on the last pitch of Outer Space, are a revealing artifact from the early ages of climbing. Kor probably never envisioned that so many people would eventually get into this sport of

vertical adventure. Part of Kor's legacy is a reminder of the crucial need to take the long view approach to the sport and profession of climbing.

In taking the long view approach, we know that means that our professional community needs to work within the system in order to help evolve it for the better. With regard to Director's Order #41, the AMGA agrees with other climbing advocates that some level of management of new fixed hardware in specific park zones is a step in the right direction of making the sport of climbing sustainable for future generations. If we can all support land management practices that will ultimately limit impacts on the resource, then we can help ensure that our public lands remain accessible to all of us, including our clients, our children and generations of guides to come.

The critical mission of making recreation sustainable now and for the future leads us to the contentious topic of permits for guiding on public lands. As Access Director, I hear a lot of complaints about the permitting system we have in the US and how repressive it is to the profession of guiding. As you know, permits are essentially contracts, which exist for managing the use of lands and limiting the liability of land managers. While the AMGA understands that permits are a way to manage and protect the public and the resource, we are also aware that the process for getting permits needs to be streamlined especially in instances of excessive oversight. Because of these present-day realities, the AMGA is working hard to make the application and management process more consistent, to ease unnecessary moratoriums on commercial access and expand the availability of more permits through programs such as Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs).

In my conversations with many AMGA members, I hear the consistent message that the guiding profession will be strengthened for the future if we continue to effectively protect and preserve our wild lands. As guides in the field, taking clients under your professional wing, your philosophical and practical support of these long-view management practices is key. Ultimately, as a professional community of instructors and guides, we must consistently convey to land managers that we fully understand that resources are fragile and finite and we want a long-term, sustainable solution to commercial access.

In light of the huge opportunity we have ahead of us to improve the current system for guiding in America, the AMGA needs your support. Many of you have made a great effort to share your suggestions. Please keep them coming! I am eager to hear about your ideas for improving the quality and quantity of access on public lands. As you know, the Strategic Planning process for the next five years is in the works with a target of submitting the first draft plan at the June Board Meeting. This quarter is the ideal time to submit your top priorities for improving access.

Again, thank you for your leadership in showing the public how to climb softly and reminding them that every move they make impacts the future of the sport and the profession.

2011 Climbing Instructor Program Trainings

Here is information and the schedule for the 2011 Climbing Instructor Program Provider Trainings.

These trainings are for highly experienced guides and climbing instructors who would like to become AMGA licensed providers for the Single Pitch Instructor or Climbing Wall Instructor programs or both. To determine if you meet the prerequisites to join the Provider Pool and to get an overview of the process involved, go to the following links:

For the SPI Programs go to – www.amga.com/programs/SPIprovider_requirements.php

For the CWI Program go to – http://www.amga.com/programs/CWIprovider_training.php

SPI PROVIDER POOL TRAINING LOCATIONS, DATES, AND COST ARE:

Joshua Tree National Park, CA • March 12-13 • \$300 (Full)

Boulder, CO • May 25-26 • \$300

New Paltz, NY • October 24-25 • \$300

Adam Fox will be the Trainer for the March and October trainings;
John Bicknell will be the Trainer for the May training.

A note to current SPI Providers: Attending Day 2 of any of these trainings will meet the requirement for maintaining SPI Provider status. There will be a limited number of spaces available that will be filled on a first come basis. Another option for renewing is, on October 23, a one-day SPI Program Provider Refresher will be held in New Paltz, New York in conjunction with the AMGA Annual Meeting. Contact me if you would like to attend any of these trainings. The cost for the one day refresher or for attending day 2 of a Provider Training is \$75.

CWI PROVIDER POOL TRAINING LOCATIONS, DATES, COST AND TRAINERS ARE:

Baylor University, TX • May 5-6 • \$300 • Kelli McMahan

Boulder, CO • May 10-11 • \$300 • John Bicknell

Boston, MA • October 3-4 • \$300 • Joe Lentini

San Antonio, TX • November 6-7 • \$300 • TBD

The Boulder training will precede the Climbing Wall Association Annual Conference; the Boston training will precede the Wilderness Risk Management Conference; the San Antonio training will follow the

Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education. The San Antonio dates are subject to change based on the AORE schedule.

These CWI trainings are aimed toward individuals who manage indoor climbing walls and climbing structures, have significant indoor climbing and teaching experience, and who have an interest in offering this AMGA certification program to their clients, staff or students.

Both the AMGA Climbing Wall Instructor Program and the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Program have been recognized and endorsed as meeting the “training standards” of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA.)

Interested parties should contact Ed Crothers, AMGA Climbing Instructor Program Director, by email at: ed@amga.com or by phone at: 303-271-0984.



Marmot FOR LIFE



Athlete: Mike Leake
 Location: Jackson Hole, Wyoming
 Photographer: Gabe Rogel

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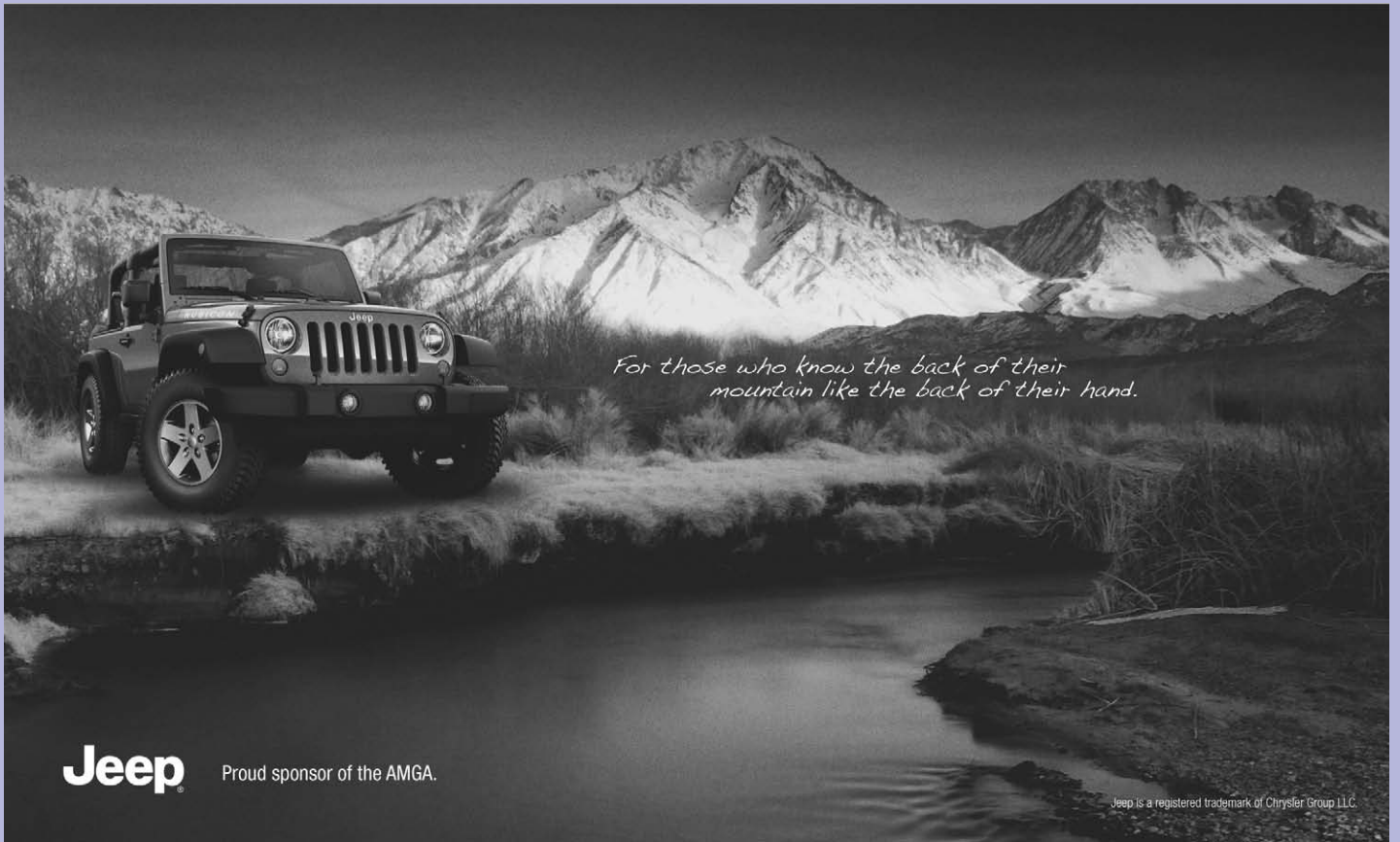
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR – JOSH HARROD

membership update

The days are getting longer, but winter still has a firm grip on the Colorado Front Range. I hope everyone is getting out and enjoying this stellar snow year (at least that's what the folks in Jackson are saying). A few items of business from the membership world, worth noting –

Membership and Certification

Did you know that in order to keep your AMGA Certifications current, you must keep your Membership up-to-date? It's true. The most obvious place this is realized is on the Hire a Guide page on www.amga.com. When your Membership expires, your listing is automatically removed, until you renew. The moment your renewal is processed, your listing will reappear.

You should receive renewal notices beginning 2 months prior to your membership expiring (and 2 months after it expires). If you've not seen a renewal notice lately, check your junk mailbox and/or visit your my.amga.com page and make sure we have your current email address on file. You can update your email along with other contact information on your page. While there, you can also check your membership status and renew online if needed.

Corporate Partners

Our Corporate Partner Program is going strong and continues to grow. We are honored to be working with our current list of Partners and are always looking add new ones. Currently we have 11 Diamond Partners, 8 Benefactor Partners, 12 Patron Partners and 29 Supporting Partners, for a total of 60 businesses or individuals going above and beyond to support the AMGA.

In the past month there has been some movement among our Partner ranks. Long-time Patron Partner, Outdoor Research has upgraded to the Benefactor level for 2011, and Deuter has made the move from Supporting Partner to Patron. We also welcome the return of La Sportiva (Patron), Garmont (Supporting) and Life-Link (Suupporting) after taking a year off. And we are excited to add Millet as a new Supporting Partner.

As a non-profit organization, the AMGA relies largely on the generous support of its contributing members and corporations to fund operations. Thank You to all of our Partners for allowing us the ability to continue our mission of Inspiring an exceptional client experience as the premier source for training, credentials, resource stewardship and services for mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States.

We're Headed to The 'Gunks

If you've not already heard, the decision was made at the fall '10 Board Meeting to hold the 2011 Annual Meeting in The 'Gunks. The tentative dates have been set and we're beginning on working out all the details. To help us plan accordingly, we will be requiring those attending to register. Once we get everything pinned down, we will update everyone on how to register. To help you plan your travel, the tentative schedule will look something like this:

- Monday, Oct. 24 • WFR Refresh
- Tuesday, Oct. 25 • WFR Refresh
- Wednesday, Oct. 26
 - Professional Development Clinics
 - Opening Night Event
- Thursday, Oct. 27
 - Professional Development Clinics
- Friday, Oct. 28
 - Guides Olympics
 - The Main Event
- Saturday, Oct. 29 • Technical Committee Meeting
- Sunday, Oct. 30 • Board of Directors Meeting
- Monday, Oct. 31 • Instructor Pool Training
- Tuesday, Nov. 1 • Instructor Pool Training

It's guaranteed to be a good time. We hope to see you there!

That's all for this edition of the Membership Update. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Cheers. Josh



CGC Update

by Scott D. Schell, Executive Director • Certified Guides Co-op

I'd like to take this opportunity to go over a few of the recent accomplishments of the Certified Guides Cooperative. We've been very busy since the New Year and we've passed several important milestones.

We're up and running!

The first and most momentous achievement – we've officially launched our operations. The middle of February marked the date of the first CGC-run trip. We did it! This gives us a great sense of accomplishment and confidence that our business structure is sound and the co-op will truly work. Guides can join the co-op and begin to work immediately.

International Rate Change

We recently evaluated the workload that goes into management of our various operations and decided to create two categories of use: domestic and international. This better reflects the actual costs of managing our operations and changes the pricing structure.

International – We changed our daily rate for a day of international guiding to \$25 US. A CGC Active Member pays the CGC this rate per day of guiding regardless of the number of clients (keeping in mind the CGC client to guide ratios - found on the CGC website in the Frequently Asked Questions section and Guides Manual). We feel this is a great value to US-based guides wanting to augment their work with international guiding. While our insurance abroad has some limitations (e.g., the guide must be based in the US and claims must be filed in a US court) the CGC provides clear guidelines upfront to our members about those limitations. If you are a US-based guide guiding in Europe or other locales, the insurance through the CGC is a known quantity and a great value compared to other insurance programs. For more details about our policy and working overseas, please give me a call or shoot me an email.

Domestic – The daily rates for US guiding have remained unchanged since we unveiled them at the AMGA fall meeting in Boulder. The daily guiding fee is scaled such that the more you guide, the less it costs. For 0-10 days the cost is \$70/day, days 11-20 are \$60/day, days 21-50 are \$50/day, and days 51+ are \$25/day. Like the international fees, these are daily rates that are unaffected by the number of clients or the gross earnings of the trip. These fees are used for the background costs of running the CGC which include: administration of the permits and the permit application fees, guide insurance premiums, staff, the CGC website and databases, marketing, etc.

Of all these services, permit management is perhaps the most valuable to a guide. The time needed to acquire and manage a single permit can become significant, and it really begins to add up once there are several permits to manage. Having a ready-to-use collection of managed permits gives members increased opportunity for work and is the foundation of the CGC.

Permits

Since permits are the basis of providing access in the US, the CGC has been working non-stop to obtain various permits throughout the US and Canada that will increase work opportunities for CGC members. The CGC Board of Directors has created a permit committee that is tasked with prioritizing permit acquisition. Based on recommendations from this committee, we have built a long list of permits that the CGC will seek. Please see the CGC website for the most up-to-date information on our permit strategy. We have spent a lot of time speaking directly with land managers, and our cooperative model has been well received. This gives us renewed optimism with what the future might bring!

PERMITS

Permits CURRENTLY held by the CGC:

White Mountain National Forest
Moab BLM
Indian Creek BLM Bridalveil Falls –
Telluride, CO
Banff National Park, Canada
Yoho National Park, Canada
Kootenay National Park, Canada
Mt. Revelstoke, National Park, Canada
Glacier National Park, Canada

Permits in process and expected soon:

North Cascades National Park
Boulder Open Space (*the Flatirons*)
El Dorado Canyon State Park
Devils Tower
Black Canyon, CO
Valdez (*four areas: BLM, National Forest
Service, AK state lands, AK State Park
Lands*)
Washington State Parks (*Little Si Exit 38,
etc.*)

GET ACCESS! GET INSURANCE!! Join the CGC Today!!!

Certified Guides, small guide services, guide service owners, IFMGA country organizations, large guide services, etc. are all members that comprise our industry and form a community - and community is what a co-op is all about. We have developed a multi-year strategic plan that incorporates all of these entities into our cooperative structure. There are countless ways this organization can grow, and we're navigating the growth process with careful planning and several seasoned experts guiding us.

While we've achieved a great deal in the areas of permits, insurance, and operations, without membership – you – we cannot exist. Our membership committee is personally calling the Certified Guides of the AMGA to ask for your support of the Certified Guides Co-op. I encourage you to let us know how this co-op can fit into your guiding goals and then join the CGC.

For more information:
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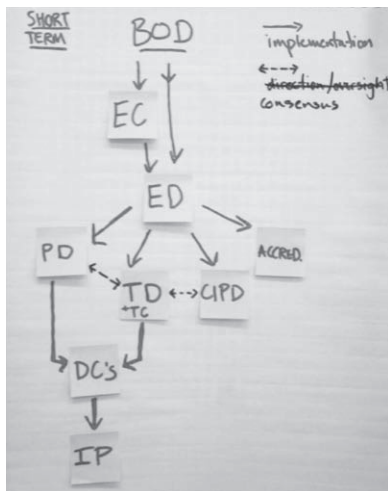


Exhibit B: Group Consensus

The Board oversees the ED, directly and via the Executive Committee. The ED oversees the work of the Program Director, the Technical Director, the Climbing Instructor Program Director, and Accreditation (note that the Membership Director and the Access Director are not included in this schematic). The TD and the PD need to reach consensus for implementation, just as the TD and the TD need to work together. The Technical Committee serves as an advisory body for the TD, and the DC's work with both the PD and the TD. These changes will be drafted into our bylaws for a vote at the June meeting.

The Question of Board Function

The second question was how to further improve the functionality of our board. There were multiple topics under this heading, and for this session we focused in particular on the Executive Committee. We also brought up – and tabled until the next session – the topics of succession planning for board officers, the size of our board, and several other ideas. In this session, we reorganized the EC and created more detailed description of its responsibilities. These changes will be drafted into our bylaws for a vote at the June meeting, and a summary of the complete proposal will be in the BOD Minutes from the January 25th Meeting. A summary of some of the changes follows:

1. The EC is made up of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and one At Large member of the Board.
2. EC Members are required to attend all Board meetings
3. EC duties are expanded to include oversight of board committees, review of financial statements (with the Treasurer), employment reviews for the Executive Director, and creation of board meeting agendas.

The Question of Voting

The third issue from our planning session was a proposal to give the Executive Director a vote on the board. This discussion expanded to include the TD having a vote on the board (which is in our current bylaws). There are many models for this in the for-profit and non-profit world, and we discussed the various reasons why an ED may or may not have a vote. Our consensus as a board was to give the ED a vote and keep the TD on the board with a vote, with the following terms:

1. The ED will abstain from any vote that carries any conflict of interest (just as with every board member).
2. The ED and the TD will not be part of executive sessions unless otherwise invited by the board.
3. The ED and the TD cannot serve as officers on the board

In doing so, our intention as a board was that the bylaws support the close work between the ED and the Board, and the ED and the Executive Committee. The ED and the TD will have a voice and a vote on the board, and the board function is supported by the structure of the EC, the use of executive session, and the bylaws.

Looking Forward

The work of the board in 2010 was very much focused on asking some tough questions and digging into some complex issues. This is all part of our strategic planning process, and in 2010 we made a great start on it.

Mission and Vision. What is the AMGA? What is our vision? Where are we now, and where do we want to be in five years?

Training and Certification. These programs are the heart of our organization – how do we support them, improve them, and build them to meet the needs of American guides?

Access. We have a full-time Access Director in the AMGA office, and the CGC has launched from the nest of the AMGA and is beginning its own flight. How do we describe the current access paradigm? What is our vision for the future?

Governance. How can we plan for the AMGA structure and function as we evolve, grow, and mature as an organization?

The words for 2011: Go Baby, Go. We will continue our work in strategic planning, with the target date of June 2011 for this process to come to fruition. And even as we continue this work, I want to point our gaze to the next phase: implementation. We have our work cut out for us!

In 2011 we be offering 19 scholarships – two more than last year. The new scholarships come from First Ascent – our newest Diamond Partner and Outdoor Research – they've moved from Patron Partner to Benefactor Partner.

There are plans to grow our AMGA-branded merchandise selection in 2011. We are working with Mammut and other Corporate Partners to acquire some technical pieces to embroider and resell. We are also looking at expanding our merchandise by adding hats, new hoodies, and perhaps a few other items in the near future.

In response to the recent news regarding the temporary prohibition of aspirant guiding in France the AMGA is in the process of getting the current work requirements in addition to the equivalence submission requirements translated into English and out to our members. Also, the AMGA is working on translating our program curriculum and making it available to IFMGA guides in electronic format for inclusion in the Equivalence application.

In conclusion, you can see there is a lot going on in the AMGA world. Moving forward we at the AMGA office will continue to do our part in inspiring an exceptional client experience as the premier source for training, credentials, resource stewardship and services for mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States. I will continue to do my part in implementing a sound budget, managing our costs, overseeing the planning, implementation and evaluation of all our programs and services and fostering effective team work between the Board, Executive Director, AMGA staff, including the Instructor and Examiner team, and our constituents.

Hopefully, you feel the AMGA is doing its part in representing your interests as aspiring and professional guides and as members of our organization. If you have questions, comments or concerns regarding the goals and objectives of each AMGA department (Membership, Programs (Guide Track, Climbing Instructor and Accreditation) Access) or the direction in which the organization is heading please do not hesitate to call or email me. Your input is valuable and integral to future decision-making as the AMGA continues to grow and advance. Hope you are having a thriving winter season and enjoying all it has to offer.

THANK YOU

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