

# GUIDE

## BULLETIN



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IMPROVE YOUR  
GUIDING GAME

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# GUIDE

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**On the cover:** Trevor Kostanich (AMGA Apprentice Ski Guide) schralps yet another line during a 34-day ski traverse through Washington's Cascades with Forest McBrien (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide). Their endeavor was featured on the front page of *The Seattle Times*. Read more on page 30. PHOTO BY SCOTT RINCKENBERGER

**This page:** AMGA Ski Guide Matthew Primomo sets the skin track on Justice Glacier during the 2016 Ski Guide Exam out of Selkirk Lodge, British Columbia, Canada. PHOTO BY LOGAN TALBOTT





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I'VE LED THE FINAL PITCH OF RECOMPENSE ON CATHEDRAL LEDGE AT least a dozen times. Once at dusk without a headlamp. But this time, on the second-to-last day of my Rock Guide Course, an instructor and two fellow students are watching. I approach the crux, which comes quickly off the belay, and place a decent piece. Then I second-guess myself as I move into the tips layback move. Am I going to grease off? What does my instructor want to see? If I were to fall, would I land on my clients' heads? I back off the crux and fumble to place a new high piece.

Education is the core of the AMGA. The Climbing Wall Instructor Course Providers, Single Pitch Instructor Course Providers, and Instructor Team deliver our most important product. Here, however, I want to recognize all of our students.

I like to think that I face unique pressure on courses as the Executive Director. Yet, when I step back, I realize every student on an AMGA course, no matter their existing skills, is pushed and challenged, some certainly more so than I am. It's part of the learning process... but it isn't always fun. Being a good student is hard work, requires preparation, and demands significant time and financial commitments. That so many people have chosen to learn with the AMGA is remarkable.

That Rock Guide Course was in the summer of 2016. Last spring I approached my Alpine Guide Course with a little more confidence. Turns out, I have a few things to work on. If you ever want to get short-roped through the mountains of Colorado, let me know—I most certainly need the practice. But what made the biggest impression on me were my fellow students. They were keen learners, willing to absorb skills and feedback from our instructors. And, perhaps more importantly, they were eager to support and encourage each other. I salute my fellow RGC and AGC peers alongside all AMGA students for your commitment to learning, growing, and building a stronger profession of American guiding and instructing!

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Kosseff".

Alex Kosseff, AMGA Executive Director  
alex@amga.com  
(303) 323-8731

MATT HENRY, FOREST MCBRIAN (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE), AND TREVOR KOSTANICH (AMGA APPRENTICE SKI GUIDE) PUSH INTO THE UNKNOWN FOLLOWING A CONTINUOUS 4,500' DESCENT FROM THE NORTHEAST SUMMIT OF DOME PEAK, GLACIER PEAK WILDERNESS, NORTH CASCADES, WASHINGTON.

PHOTO BY SCOTT RINCKENBERGER

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# LIVE WITHOUT LIMITS

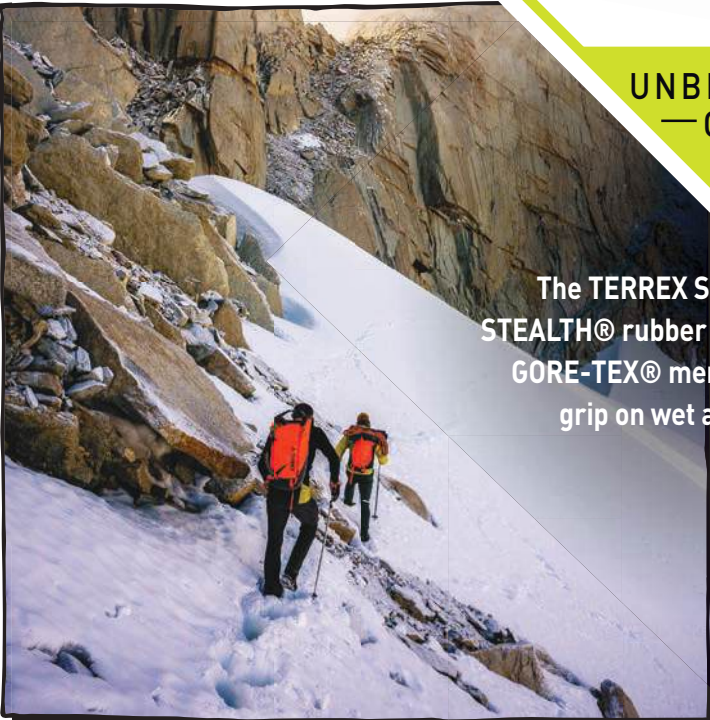
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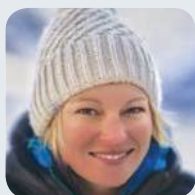
Adrian Ballinger — **IMPROVE YOUR GUIDING GAME** — Olympic Valley, California

An American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, Adrian is the founder and head guide of Alpenglow Expeditions, which operates 30 trips annually on five continents. Adrian is also a professional speaker and often acts as an expert voice on climbing and mountaineering news in the media. Adrian has 10 8,000-meter summits and is the only American who has skied two 8,000-meter peaks.



Rob Coppelillo — **THE GUIDING LIFE** — Boulder, Colorado

Rob co-owns Vetta Mountain Guides in Boulder, Colorado. He and Marc Chauvin, both American Mountain Guides/IFMGA Guides, co-authored *The Mountain Guide Manual* (Falcon Guides, \$24.95). All mistakes in the book are his and his alone.



Emilie Drinkwater — **IMPROVE YOUR GUIDING GAME** — Salt Lake City, Utah

Emilie grew up alpine and Nordic ski racing in New Hampshire and learned to climb in the Adirondack Mountains. Though most at home on the rugged crags and icy mountains of the Northeast, Emilie has first ascents in India's Karakoram and Afghanistan's Hindu Kush mountains. She is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide.



Russell Hunter — **IMPROVE YOUR GUIDING GAME** — Longmont, Colorado

Russell was conceived in a tent. His mountain spirit was nurtured as a Boy Scout, and college football ingrained his "team first" mentality. He cultivated his leadership skills as a NOLS instructor, then started guiding in Alaska where he learned how to suffer gracefully. He brings all these skills to Colorado Mountain School, where after 10 years of guiding, he is now the owner. Russell is an AMGA Rock Instructor.



Alan Oram — **ASK ALAN** — Wilson, Wyoming

Alan started skiing in the 1960s and climbing in the mid-70s before camming devices hit the market. After a 14-year break that led him through medical school and two residency training programs, he currently practices emergency medicine, works as an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, and serves as medical advisor to the AMGA and many private guiding companies.



Mark Smiley — **EQUIPPED** — Jackson, Wyoming

Mark grew up in Indianapolis, first climbed in a gym at age 14, then overcame the geographical hurdles of climbing in the Midwest by making his way right after college to Mt. Rainier, where his career took off. Today he is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide and enjoys guiding in new places around the world, taking photos, shooting video, and seeking out classic climbs.





# AWAKENINGS

*Client Experiences that Opened Worlds*

JULIAN LEADS HER DAUGHTER UP LOOKING GLASS ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA. PHOTO BY KARSTEN DELAP

**T**HE BEST TRIP I'VE BEEN ON WAS ACTUALLY a succession of two trips. The first was a multi-pitch climb with Karsten Delap (AMGA Rock and Alpine Guide) and Bill Day (AMGA SPI, Apprentice Rock Guide) through Fox Mountain Guides (FMG). My family was vacationing in North Carolina from Florida, and Karsten and Bill led us up the North Ridge (5.5) in Linville Gorge. We had climbed with FMG the summer before and wanted to try multi-pitch once just to check the box and say we had done it. It didn't quite turn out that way. It was phenomenal, and we had such a good time that Karsten encouraged us to lead ourselves, which culminated in me leading my then-12-year-old daughter up my first multi-pitch lead, Second Coming (5.7), a little over a year later under Karsten's watchful eye—he was literally right next to me on a fixed line he set up.

The experience was life-changing in that it showed me I was capable of *way* more than I ever imagined. It also gave me a love for the outdoors that I never had until I found climbing. This combination led me

to keep learning all things climbing and exploring, pushing every limit I had all the while. Long story short, I went from being a housewife in Florida who refused to fly on a plane to a co-owner of FMG who has now traveled the world climbing, including summiting the Matterhorn with American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Silas Rossi. Clearly, AMGA guides, particularly Karsten, played a pivotal role in this progression; I never could have accomplished any of this without them. The best part of it all is the example it set for my kids, who knew me before and after. I think it opened up the world for them, too, showing them that anyone can do pretty much anything they want with determination and a little luck.

—Cristin Julian, Columbia, SC



NATE DISSER (AMGA ALPINE AND ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT Ski Guide) and I went to Alaska in 2007 and climbed Mt. Barille and the Mooses Tooth. It was the best guided trip of my life. We endured bad weather, days on end in a tent, crevasses, and rock fall. Despite being in a very wild and dangerous place, I was pretty comfortable the whole time. By the end of the trip, it was like Nate and I were climbing partners and friends more than anything else.

I always feel like I get better at climbing after a trip like that, but that's almost beside the point. Climbing in extreme settings eliminates all the clutter in my head. For much of the time on route, all I think about is where to put my hands and feet. The distractions of life disappear. We eat some food, we drink some water, and we move upward. When we get to the top, we enjoy it for a moment, descend, and by the end of the day we are physically and emotionally spent. The simplicity of the endeavor is remarkable.

—Zac Merriman, McLean, VA



MERRIMAN STANDS AT THE BASE OF THE PETIT GREPON IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO. PHOTO BY LANCE SULLINS





MIELCARZ SMILES HER WAY UP A PITCH IN RED ROCK NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA, NEVADA, WITH ELAINA ARENZ. PHOTO BY ELAINA ARENZ

**R**ECENT RETIREE, AGE 59, LIVING IN PENSACOLA, Florida—I didn't exactly fit the usual profile when I decided to try ice climbing in Ouray. I hired San Juan Mountain Guides and was lucky to get Lindsay Fixmer (AMGA Rock Guide, Assistant Alpine Guide) as my guide. Those four days opened up a world to me that I never even knew existed. On my way back to Florida I had a lot of time to think. The thrill of climbing had made me realize my life had fallen into a rut. Five months later I sold my home, packed up my truck, and took an extended road trip out West.

Lindsay hooked me up with Elaina Arenz (AMGA Rock Guide, Apprentice Alpine Guide) at Red Rock where I also fell in love with rock climbing. I eventually bought a pop-up camper that I lived in for a year and a half. Elaina recommended Chicks Climbing and Skiing, and I have since taken many of their clinics including ice, rock, alpine climbing, and backcountry skiing. I relocated to Ouray in September 2016, and I'm now fortunate enough to have every option available to me right out my front door.

Climbing has been one of the most challenging things I have ever experienced. Every guide I've encountered during this journey has encouraged me to achieve beyond what I knew I was even capable of, a realization that convinced me to reevaluate and drastically change my lifestyle.

—Diane Mielcarz, Ouray, CO





**T**HE BEST GUIDED TRIP I HAVE BEEN ON was my first trip to the Chugach Mountains in Alaska with Todd Passey (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide) in 2010. The trip consisted of three days of touring, one full heli day with Valdez Heli Guides, and a heli bump day on our last day. The sheer majesty of the Chugach was awe-inspiring. And the snowpack—wet enough to stick to steep mountains, then dried by Arctic air—was perfectly velvety.

On the last morning, we woke to a bluebird sky and climbed into the heli with palpable anticipation. Doug Workman (AMGA Assistant Rock Guide, Apprentice Ski and Apprentice Alpine Guide) began briefing us about the landing on Python Peak. Todd put on a headset, and Doug started feeding him beta. As we approached the couloir, I have to admit, my first thought was, “Wow, we are really going to ski that!?” We extracted ourselves and our ski equipment from the helicopter, it took off, and we were left with nothing but flowing adrenaline and sudden and total silence. That moment alone, that quiet in the vastness of the Chugach, was an incredibly humbling experience.

I’ve subsequently returned to Valdez and

skied Mt. Dimond with my oldest son, but that descent of the Cherry Couloir, thanks to the seamless behind-the-scenes work of the guides who made it happen, is etched in my memory as very possibly the best run of my life.

Each day spent in the mountains provides a sense of spiritual renewal and, at the same time, incredible humility. Perhaps the greatest compliment I ever received was when guide Brian Warren (AMGA Ski Guide, Alpine Guide, Assistant Rock Guide), skiing with my family for the first time in Grand Teton National Park, said to me, “The Nestor kids can ski, but the respect they have for the mountains has got my attention.”

The joy of being able to spend an epic day in the mountains through the collective experience of the AMGA and its certified and trained guides is something that can only be experienced. It’s beyond description, truly transformative—an experience that provides food for the soul. Charlie Marousek, a lifetime friend and longtime Jackson resident, once said to me, “You’re going to start to hear the voices, and they are going to get louder.” Indeed they have!

—Bryan Nestor, St. Paul, MN

NESTOR BOOTS UPHILL IN SVALBARD, NORWAY, IN 2017. “IT’S AS MUCH ABOUT THE UP AS THE DOWN,” HE SAYS. PHOTO BY WINSLOW PASSEY





RICHARD BACKCOUNTRY SKIS WITH AMOS WHITING AFTER A HELI DROP NEAR TELLURIDE, COLORADO. PHOTO BY TERRY BANNON

I HAVE BEEN ON MANY TRIPS WITH AMOS Whiting (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide), but the first one was definitely the most life-changing for me. It was a climbing trip to Beaune, France, and the first time I climbed outside.

With nerve damage in my right shoulder and a very limited range of motion, climbing was something I thought I would never do. Fortunately I started climbing with Ben Hendrickson, a patient indoor instructor who built me up slowly to a level where I felt I could maybe try climbing outside. Truthfully, I was terrified, not knowing what it would be like—or if I could do it at all.

Then I found Amos. He was equally as patient and got to know me before our trip even started. He even traded emails with Ben to better understand me and my climbing ability.

I'd been to Beaune many times, doing research for my restaurant in New York. It was Amos' first time in the area, but he was somehow able to find cool places to climb that I'd never heard of. To say I was in awe of that ability would be an understatement. We would leave the hotel, drive past the familiar vineyards, and then at a seemingly random tree or bend, turn into the forest, and park. A short walk later, there we were, at a beautiful rock wall. We would climb all morning, return to town for lunch, then go to a few wineries for tastings before dinner. We repeated this routine for four days. At the end

of each day, I was more comfortable climbing outside, less intimidated by the rock, and more in love with climbing than ever.

Amos took me to walls that fit my skill level perfectly. I was challenged, but never to the point where I was too frightened to continue. Climbing those four days changed my life. I realized that my shoulder injury didn't have to hold me back, that I could climb outside and thoroughly enjoy this new sport. After that trip, I climbed more often indoors and went on more trips with Amos all over the world. That October I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I had a mastectomy in December. The question I asked my doctor after surgery was, "When can I run and climb again?" After 3 months of healing, climbing was there for me as my escape and my physical therapy. My trip to Beaune with Amos set the stage for climbing to always be in my life as something I enjoy immensely—and something to fall back on when times get tough.

—Jodi Richard, New York City, NY



**I**KNEW THAT I SHOULDN'T HIKE ALONE TO SUMMIT MT. MEEKER IN ROCKY Mountain National Park, so I called Colorado Mountain School. I will be forever grateful that they assigned Mark Hammond (AMGA Rock Guide) to me.

I trained all of summer 2010 to be prepared for the 13,911-foot peak. Mark and I met for the first time at 2:30 a.m. at the trailhead. Four hours into the hike, a storm blew in, and we were forced to turn around. After all my hard work, I was devastated, but Mark said we would try again. I was worried that it would be a drag for him to schlep a 53-year-old to the top of a mountain, so I gave him the chance to beg off. But Mark said he could tell how badly I wanted it, so we met again three weeks later, and when we topped out, I cried. Although I'd been up Longs Peak, I found this to be a more challenging summit, and I had worked so hard to get there. Mark's encouragement and belief in me are such a huge part of what I remember from that day.

During our descent, Mark suggested I try rock climbing. I thought he was crazy. Although I was certain I wouldn't like it, Mark's conviction that I could do it was enough to make me want to give it a shot. He saw something in me that day that I didn't recognize in myself, and he led me to what is now my greatest joy—climbing.

Who would have guessed that at that age, I would find my life's passion? I have never been one to back down from a challenge, but climbing upped the ante. I will never be a 5.14 climber, but I do not doubt for one second that I derive the same satisfaction and sense of accomplishment from my hard-fought 5.10 as any 5.14 climber who learned at a younger age and is more gifted than I am. It is not about the grade; it is about the focus and perseverance required to accomplish the goal. Even if I never make it to the top, it won't be because I didn't try. That's a lesson I took home from that first trip with Mark, and one I've lived by ever since.

—Becky Browning, Estes Park, CO



BROWNING CLIMBS WITH GUIDE MARK HAMMOND IN ELDERADO CANYON STATE PARK, COLORADO. PHOTO BY MARK HAMMOND





KASABIAN CELEBRATES HIS ASCENT OF THE GRAND TETON WITH BEN HOINESS IN 2016. PHOTO BY BEN HOINESS

**I** FIRST FOUND MY PASSION FOR THE MOUNTAINS as a constructive medicinal remedy after returning from Iraq. I climbed several of the Lower 48's most classic mountains, including Mt. Rainier and Mt. Whitney. When my fiancée, Amy Stuart, and I were looking for the next challenging climb, it wasn't hard to settle on the Grand Teton. It had everything I wanted in a mountain: soaring altitude, fifth-class climbing, and unbelievable beauty.

The decision to utilize a guide service was an easy one. We had decided to forego a guide for a fourth-class route on Whitney and, after some potentially dangerous mistakes, decided always to hire a guide on big mountains for anything more significant than Class II hiking.

Amy and my stepson, Isaac, joined me in August 2016 to climb the Grand. The three of us attempted the climb, but we had to divert to a satellite summit called the Enclosure. The decision by the guide was the right one given our pace. On the flight home, I told Amy that I wanted to return before the season ended to go to the summit. I returned two weeks later.

When I met my guide, Ben Hoiness (AMGA Apprentice Rock Guide), I told him about my previous experience and that I wanted to make the summit, but was concerned because the first snowstorm of the season was moving in. Ben said that if we could move fast enough up to high camp, we could go all the way to the summit that day and then go back to high camp that evening. We moved fast—very fast for

me. Ben was fantastic. He pushed me, but in a way that kept me motivated. We ascended to the summit, almost 7,000 feet of elevation gain, in just over six hours. I never thought I could move that fast in the mountains. Ben changed my paradigm of what I was capable of accomplishing.

This experience has opened up new doors and new friends for me. A few weeks after I climbed the Grand with Ben, he called me and invited me to participate in a sport-climbing course that he and his mentor Zahan Billimoria (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide) were setting up for Exum in Lander, Wyoming. This course changed my perspective on climbing. I've added rock-climbing objectives to my climbing goals as well as bigger alpine routes.

I stay in touch regularly with both Ben and Zahan. I share with Ben my goals and discuss plans for accomplishing them. Zahan and I discuss how I get my mountain conditioning to the place I need to accomplish those goals. Last winter when Amy and I went to Jackson Hole to go skiing, we went to dinner with Ben and Z. It was like getting together with old friends.

Guides are there to push people who need it and pull back the reins on those who would push it too far. I love this about the professional guide. Balancing customer goals, the risks of mountain travel, and enjoyment sometimes can be contradictory objectives, but the best guides—the guides I've had—balance them perfectly.

—Dan Kasabian, Ashburn, VA



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# IMPROVE YOUR GUIDING GAME

## MARKETING YOURSELF SUCCESSFULLY

*By Adrian Ballinger*

**I**N THE GUIDING WORLD, THERE IS A CULTURE of allowing your accomplishments to speak for themselves. The humble climber who underplays his or her successes has traditionally been the standard; the climber or skier who “sprays” about climbs or descents, regardless of magnitude, gets a hard time. Our reverence for the quiet-crusher style is one of the great things about our community.

For independent guides, though, this presents a challenge. Our culture tells us to stay quiet, but that’s at odds with the fact that we need to be our own marketing departments. To maximize our value to our clients, our community, and ourselves, part of our job is to share our stories. Luckily, this is easier to do than ever before—without compromising on humility.

These eight tips have helped me to become more effective in my marketing efforts, while staying true to my integrity as a climber, skier, and guide first, and a business owner second.

1. **Focus on Storytelling.** The beautiful reality is that we have dream jobs. Our daily grind is our clientele’s dream vacation. You don’t have to hard-sell anything. Just tell stories. About your training, your days out with clients, and your personal days. It all inspires, and builds your community beyond those lucky enough to actually climb or ski with you.

STUDENTS PRACTICE SHORTROPING ON AN ALPINE GUIDE COURSE IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO.

PHOTO BY MIKE POBORSKY

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**To maximize our value to our clients, our community, and ourselves, part of our job is to share our stories.**

**—Adrian Ballinger**

2. **Treat It as Part of the Job.** Our day no longer ends when the clients are back in town or tucked into their tents for the night. Social media storytelling takes effort, on and off the clock. Make it a part of your daily routine. Choose your preferred channels. I like Instagram and Snapchat, but I try to force myself to post to Facebook and Twitter occasionally as well. If that's too much, choose the platform that matches your audience: more mature and established (Facebook); a bit more tech-savvy (Instagram); teen and 20-something (Snapchat); or media-focused (Twitter). Regardless of platform, I try to post daily. On Everest this spring with Cory Richards, that meant up to four hours per day on



EVEN DARING ASCENTS AND STUNNING VIEWS AREN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. HERE, BALLINGER TEAMS UP WITH CORY RICHARDS FOR A 2016 EVEREST BID, WHICH THEY DOCUMENTED METICULOUSLY TO SPREAD THE WORD.

PHOTO BY EDDIE BAUER, #EVERESTNOFILTER



painfully slow satellite Internet to get our content out. Was it worth it? My following almost doubled through the season, and that has led to new sponsors and a big uptick in private clients for trips in 2018.

3. **Keep It Professional.** While followers definitely appreciate seeing the “real” you through social media, there are lines. You’ll find your own. Personally, I chose to create hidden accounts on both Instagram and Facebook for my close friends. My public accounts can be followed by anyone, and I carefully consider posts about drinking, partying, politics, and the like. Recently I made the mistake of sending a series of snaps while driving. My followers busted me hard about the poor role-modeling this is for kids. And they were right. I apologized on my channels, and was reminded to keep it pro.
4. **Share Others’ Stories.** It doesn’t all need to be about you. Use your channels to highlight others. Find people and stories that your clients will relate to, and ones that inspire. In the Himalaya the past few seasons, I’ve prioritized posts about my climbing partners, our Sherpa, our expedition doctor, clients, other climbers (like Kilian Jornet this past spring), and our basecamp kitchen staff. These have been some of my most popular posts.
5. **Find Your Style.** Guides tend to have unique and strong personalities. Let that come through in your social media! One person’s style of post (regardless of how popular) doesn’t need to be your style. Emily Harrington (professional climber, my girlfriend of five years, and the far more social media-savvy of the two of us) constantly makes fun of me for how I narrate my snaps. And for my dad jokes. But that’s me. I talk a lot. My social media persona and my in-person persona are the same, and that’s something I really aspire to maintain.
6. **Don’t be Afraid of the Media.** I’ve met many guides who are reluctant to talk to journalists. Mainstream media is desperate for interesting stories. Ours are some of the best. And they don’t butcher our sports by default. We need to educate the media by interacting with them, and help them tell better stories and introduce more people to our sports.
7. **Have a Plan.** It is easy to just throw stuff up on social media. This is not marketing. It takes a thoughtful plan to be successful. And a plan starts with figuring out your goals. Do you want to build your general audience? Are you trying specifically to find new clients? Do you want to build closer ties with your current clients? Are you looking for sponsors or speaking gigs? Personally, I’ve split my social media accounts so they each can have a specific focus. I now use separate business accounts to focus on finding and selling to new clients. Meanwhile my personal accounts focus on my world as an athlete and my public speaking. The posts have to be different—because the goals are different.



8. **Invest in Your Marketing Efforts.** Once you have a plan, you need to be willing to invest. Growing your business, at whatever size it currently is, entails risk. Whether you are a guide working for a company (or several), a fully independent guide with clients who are 100 percent your own, or a guide-service owner, taking risk is key. In this case, risk does not entail runout pitches or no-fall ski terrain. It means putting yourself out there in front of your peers, investing your time to create content, and potentially putting your hard-earned dollars from guiding back into your business—perhaps with boosted social media posts, targeted online advertising, local advertising opportunities, or creating or participating in events.

Effective marketing doesn’t have to mean big budgets. But it does require hard work, time, a plan, and a willingness to put yourself out there in front of your peers, your clients, and potentially a worldwide audience. Rather than looking at marketing as a chore, embrace the challenge, and use it to grow your business.

”

**Instead of treating each outing as a one-and-done, treat it as the beginning of a lifelong relationship.**

**—Emilie Drinkwater**



## GENERATING ENTHUSIASTIC RETURN CLIENTS

*By Emilie Drinkwater*

**W**ANT YOUR CLIENTS TO COME BACK? IT'S MORE subtle than you think.

Back in 2001, only days into my guiding career, I made my guest cry. Prior to the tears, I had lowered her (off my harness, as we did back then) down a grungy corner now described in the guidebook as being “As uninspiring as they come and not recommended.” But at 5.5 I figured, “How bad could it be?” If I'd ever climbed the pitch myself, I might have known.

For the next 45 minutes she battled her way back out, falling, hanging, and clawing at a dirt-filled crack surrounded on both sides by featureless walls of lichen-coated rock. At one point she screamed up that something (a mouse? a bat?) had appeared at the edge of the crack, staring at her with beady, contemptuous eyes. Her terror escalated. But from my perch 10 feet back from the cliff's edge, I could neither see what was happening nor offer much in the way of advice.

Eventually she arrived at the top in tears, looking like a badger that had just fought its way out of a muddy tunnel. Her fingernails were caked in dirt and blood, and mascara ran down her face in streaks. She silently removed her harness and helmet and marched into the forest to cry in privacy. A few minutes later she came out, sheepishly

A LITTLE TACT GOES A LONG WAY WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING CLIENTS STOKED IN BAD WEATHER. HERE, THE GROUP ENDS THE DAY WITH SMILES AFTER CASHING IN ON ICELANDIC POWDER.

PHOTO BY EMILIE DRINKWATER

apologized for being so dramatic and so bad at climbing, and insisted on being taken back to her car—this wouldn't be the sport for her after all. And had I not recognized the many mistakes I'd made that day, this wouldn't have been the career for me, either. When I went home that day, I made a conscious decision to do better, to be both more observant of my guests and more self-aware, and years later, I can point to that resolution as what's made me a thoughtful guide.

These days it's rare that my decision-making, route selection, or lack of experience cause people to cry and forego mountain climbing forever. In fact, a majority of my guests even want to climb with me again! Which is good because return clients are a large part of a sustainable career. But since I rarely employ the usual techniques of handing out business cards or suggesting exotic future climbs, I started to wonder, “Why, exactly, do people come back?”

I polled a few of my longtime clients with that simple question. The reasons they gave boiled down to: trust, patience, demeanor, and likability. Interestingly, no one said technical skills, certifications, or athletic prowess (I like to believe that these are expected).



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CLIENTS RACHEL AND ELYSE FOLLOW DRINKWATER TO THE SUMMIT OF THE GRAND TETON DURING A SINGLE-DAY ASCENT IN TRICKY CONDITIONS.

PHOTO BY EMILIE DRINKWATER

There are a lot of obvious ways I can encourage guests to come back and climb or ski with me again. I can show them a great day, impress them with technical expertise, take them up (or down) something they might never do on their own, and recommend what they should do or where they should go next. However, most of the time, there's a far more subtle skill at work: an ability to read people, to innately understand why they're there, what they need out of the day, and how I can help them achieve their goals.

But "innately" understanding my guests is something that I've developed over many years. It goes hand-in-hand with a strong sense of empathy, which can take continual reminders until it becomes a habit. I constantly remind myself that, while they may not ask for it, my clients want to feel safe and free from negative judgement in an environment that is often emotionally and physically stressful. Treating each guest as I would a friend has been a good place to start.

The guide/client relationship is a dynamic one, and I have long since learned to view my guests as partners. After all, I spend far more time in the mountains as a hired guide than I do on unpaid personal trips. Recognizing my guests as partners has allowed me to go beyond just guiding—to progressively introduce people to new skills and objectives as part of a larger educational process. Ultimately, the outcome is happier guests who return again and again because I've invested as much in their development and satisfaction as they have in hiring me. Not to mention it's more efficient, more enjoyable, and easier to work with someone you already know.

Aside from thinking of my clients as partners, I also keep in mind that these are people who have made a conscious decision to spend time and money (often a lot of both) to climb and ski with me. In addition to safety, managing my guests' mental and physical comfort in the inherently risky mountain environment also has proven invaluable (i.e., don't lower someone down a grungy climb that you know nothing about and assume they'll make it back out uneventfully). This begins with patience, a calm demeanor, and excellent communication—I look people in the eye, explain what the plan is, what the expectations are, and offer them a chance to ask questions or express concerns. The goal is to develop trust, and with trust comes loyalty.

I know from my own personal experiences that new guides will make lots of mistakes. It's the "worst best" way to learn if you can recognize it as such. Experienced guides are no less fallible, but with time and practice we all come to have a better understanding of our clients. Clients start to return because they trust our recommendations, appreciate a pleasant guiding demeanor, and recognize our ability to manage risk in the mountains. Most importantly, though, they return because they've gotten to know you as a person, just as you've gotten to know them.

When you head out into the unknown with a new client, don't lower them blindly and hope for the best. Instead of treating each outing as a one-and-done, treat it as the beginning of a lifelong relationship. With a little confidence, self-awareness, and good communication, it might just turn out to be.



## IMPRESSING YOUR EMPLOYER

By Russell Hunter

AS OWNER OF COLORADO MOUNTAIN SCHOOL, a 36-year-old guide service that employs 16 year-round guides and 30 on-call guides, I daydream of having a guide staff made up of passionate, experienced, trained, certified, and talented athletes who work hard, communicate openly, make sound decisions every time, are team players always, relate well with everyone, and inspire passionate living in all of their clients...

Whew. That's a lot to take in.

We're fortunate to have a team that possesses many of these characteristics, but I have yet to meet a guide, myself included, who has it all in perfect balance. Like all humans, guides always have room to grow.

The majority of guides will choose to work for a guide service, and many work for several. There's a good reason for that. At a guide service, the office takes care of the entire booking process and supplies the guide with clients. You don't have to worry about permits or liability insurance. If you are a W-2 employee, you will be covered by workers' compensation insurance. Guide services allow the opportunity to work side-by-side with other guides in a team environment. And because guide services are often made up of quality, experienced guides, there are plenty of opportunities for training and mentoring.

As such, being a good guide is about more than being an

## HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE BRAND AMBASSADOR

Craig Randall, senior director of Verde Brand Communications—which represents Gore-Tex, Petzl, and SCARPA among others—shares his advice on what it takes to become indispensable to outdoor brands.

1. **Create Content.** Whether you're telling personal stories, submitting photography, or writing skills and how-to articles, you can contribute your voice to a brand's blog or other media presence. The brand's product doesn't have to be the star of the story, but it's always nice to share the tools of the trade whenever possible.
2. **Get on Social Media.** Use your channels to show how the brand's product or service enables your adventures. Get familiar with relevant hashtags and become an active player in brand marketing initiatives.
3. **Connect with the PR Department.** Be proactive about sharing your trips and experiences in the field. The PR team might be able to use elements of your stories for media relations or for tapping into relevant, newsworthy moments. Start sharing your personality and motivations with people inside the company more often—your voice is valuable.

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GUIDES GATHER FOR A COLORADO MOUNTAIN SCHOOL RETREAT IN APRIL 2017. TEAMWORK IS A CORE TENET OF EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS AT CMS.

PHOTO BY LUKE TERSTRIEP

independent leader. For many, it's about being a good employee and an integral part of a team. And that's a skillset of its own.

1. **The Best Ability is Availability.** Getting your foot in the door with any organization is a challenge, and guide services are no exception. This industry has constant staffing flux. The fact that guide services always need competent guides, often on short notice, actually serves up an opportunity. Make yourself available; it's one of the best ways to get involved and make a lasting impression with a guide service. At NOLS we called it "jumping"—the ability to say "yes" when the phone call comes in. When I was trying to start with Colorado Mountain School, I made myself totally available, without knowing how much I would work that first summer. By taking that risk, believing in my experiences, and having faith that an opening would come along, I ended up working a full summer and claimed my place on the team. Find the guide service you want to be part of, make yourself available, and then trust that the call will come. When it does, be able to "jump," and your foot will be in the door.
2. **We're in This Together.** As a guide working for a guide service, you are a representative of that company. The experiences your clients have is a reflection of not only you as the guide but also of the guide service. It took me a while to really understand this connection. When I first started working as a guide, it was just "The Russell Show." The Russell Show never mentioned CMS or its values or history. I was operating as if I were an independent guide on many outings. Now that I'm an owner, I realize that every outing is a chance to represent the company and help develop our brand. When guides understand that, they help the company grow, and more business is good for everyone.

Creating this team mentality is very important to me, as I am sure it is to most guide-service owners. Plus, it creates a sense of community within the company and gives us all something greater to work toward beyond just the guided day.

3. **The Fourth Discipline.** Being trained and certified in the three disciplines of Rock, Alpine, and Ski is invaluable. But there is a fourth discipline that is equally important: the business of being a

guide. This fourth discipline consists of technology, people, and sales. When I first started as a guide at CMS, I had no email account, no cell phone, and no computer. I took pride in being a Luddite! I made no effort to generate return clients. And so, I had no return clients. After a few years, CMS management encouraged me to change that, and I made the conscious decision to generate return clients.

I began sending emails out to past clients asking them what they would like to do next. This felt awkward at first because it felt salesy, but once I began to do it, I noticed most of my clients really appreciated me reaching out to them. I also found that calling first-time clients before their first outing really improved my guided day because I had already started relationship-building and knew what the client's goals and expectations were. I spent more time on my introduction talk in the morning, explaining my role as guide and my expectations around communication. And I began to mention that I accept gratuities, which really helped me earn a bit extra each outing.

Almost immediately after making these changes, I began to see clients wanting to climb with me again. This happened because I made the effort—not just because I did good work in the field. Today, I don't know what I would do without my smartphone!

4. **The Best Work is Play, and the Best Play is Work.** The best job I have ever had was being a guide! It was fulfilling, challenging, adventurous, physical, and fun. It was my passion to work with people in the mountains. I felt so incredibly fortunate to make my livelihood doing something I loved. It took me close to a decade to make a real livelihood doing it, but it was well worth the effort. I stayed with it because I loved my job, and I loved the companies and people I worked with. Now, as an owner, I would like all our guides to love their work and be committed to their craft. I want people who are passionate about being in the mountains and sharing that passion with others. Working for a guide service can be very rewarding, especially if you find one that cares about their guides and supports them as valuable members of the team. I truly believe that guides are the most important part of a guide service.





I advise all guides to continue to do what they love on a personal level. Make sure you get out on your own with friends to remember why you love climbing and to avoid burning out. Let your employer know that you love your job (but give honest feedback when appropriate). Do that, and you'll have a place at any guide service. «

## CMS ANNUAL REVIEW CATEGORIES

**Client Care/Satisfaction:** Provide exceptional experiences and receive positive client feedback in the office.

**Leadership:** Do what needs doing without asking.

**Team Mentality:** Be flexible with work assignments.

**Teaching Ability:** Create lesson plans and present them clearly and concisely.

**Daily Expectations:** Check off work tasks, contact clients, check in and out, and perform a risk-management briefing.

**Internal Communication:** Give constructive feedback to peers and the office, and be a good listener.

**Local Terrain Familiarity:** Gain experience with the areas where CMS guides.

**Judgement/Risk Management:** Consistently make sound and conservative decisions.

**Marketing:** Submit product reviews and photos to the office for social media use, and send e-blasts to guests to generate return clientele.

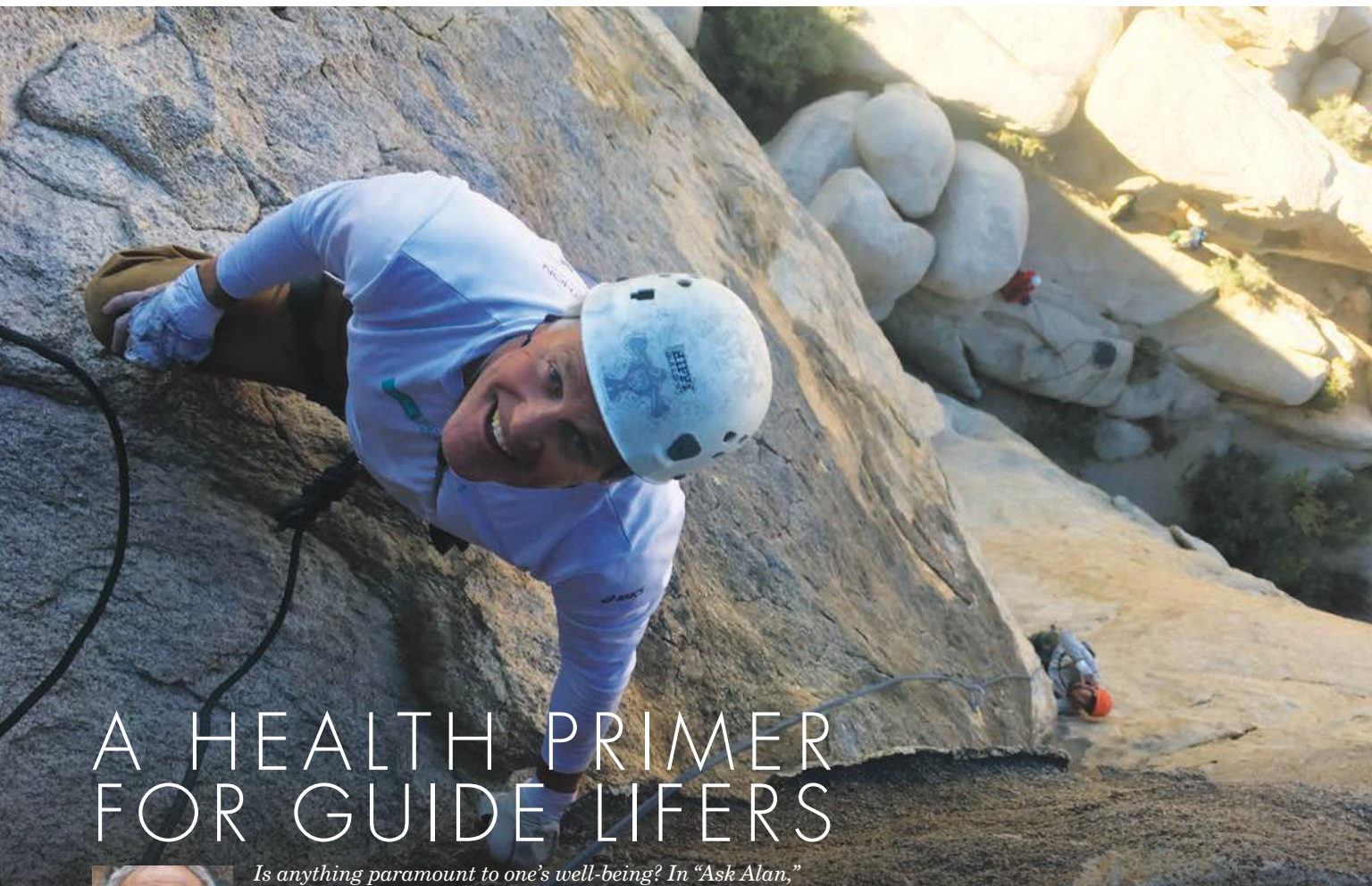
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# A HEALTH PRIMER FOR GUIDE LIFERS



*Is anything paramount to one's well-being? In "Ask Alan," longtime physician and guide Alan Oram delivers wisdom on industry-specific health concerns that you've probably pondered but perhaps never asked about.*

*By Alan Oram*

AMGA APPRENTICE ROCK GUIDE KEVIN GRAVES ON DOGLEG (5.9) DURING THE 2016 ROCK GUIDE COURSE IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN SANTELICES

**A**S A FULL-TIME GUIDE, WHAT PRECAUTIONS can I take to ensure long-term health and a lifetime of enjoyable climbing and skiing?

As a kid, I found a book called the *Mountaineering Handbook* written by Curtis Casewit and Richard Pownall that was, at the time, the quintessential tome on "how to" for climbers in the early 1960s. So, taking the bait, I tied a section of braided hemp rope around the base of my bed, tossed it out the window, and proceeded to Dulfersitz from the second-story window in my bedroom to the asphalt driveway. I was 13. My health was unimportant to me at the time.

Young or old, every guide has such tales of imprudence. We're fortunate to be alive and to travel comfortably in places that the masses look at from a distance and consider odd—maybe even pointless and selfish to visit. Do we know something they don't?

As a physician and mountain guide who's approaching 60-years-young, I've had many opportunities to see what happens to the collective "we" as we age in the mountains. No matter our efforts at maintaining fitness and motivation, climbing at a high level is work, and it's undeniably hard on the body. But there are a few consistencies I've seen over the decades that, together, are a recipe for springing from midlife into a healthy older age despite the constant pounding:

## **1. REST, RECOVERY, AND MODERATION**

As we age, our tissue becomes more brittle, and our muscles lose mass and strength. When you feel like taking a break, take heed and do so. A minor injury can turn into a debilitating overuse injury that may plague you for season after season and maybe end your career. Recovery requires



time. Ignore this and you will pay the price in long-term injuries and fatigue.

Medical advice from someone who really understands guiding is the key to getting the answers you want. Simply telling someone to “stop” the activity that engages them and forms the fundamental element of their life probably will not work. Moderation, balance, alteration of movements, and refocusing direction are often better options—so long as they are guided by an expert.

## 2. GUIDING ≠ TRAINING

When we are young, fitness seems secondary; as we age through a lifetime of skiing and climbing, our bodies pay for the abuse. Day in and day out, guiding is not the same as focused training, or even the general fitness that we need to remain sharp and trouble free in the mountains. As we age, resistance training, mobility, and general health matter.

My own recommendation is to wake up every morning and consider what you are going to do that day to take care of yourself. I personally turn to uphillathlete.com and Eric Horst’s *Training for Climbing* to develop my daily strength routines. Squeezing in such exercises, on top of a hearty guiding schedule, requires absolute commitment. But it

also means sending the next grade or maintaining your ability to ski 6,000-foot days back-to-back with ease.

## 3. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

We are all impacted by extrinsic events that surround our personal and professional lives. None of us are free from the stress and strain of our personal relationships or the effects of events beyond our control. When our friends die in the mountains, we grieve. And if we do not, we are in denial and ignorant of the impact such an event has on our day-to-day behavior and performance. Deal with issues—they will not go away, and likely will grow worse, if we ignore them. It’s been a year since our friend Gary died in the Tetons, and I still shed tears and emotions when I go up or down the Grand with clients. I stop, ask for a minute at his chorten, get my shit together, and hope I can keep it together for the rest of the up or the down.

Rest. Read and train. Ask questions of those who have been through what you are going through because, believe it or not, your problem is probably not a first ascent. «

*Have a question you’d like Alan to answer in the GUIDE Bulletin? Send it to [info@amga.com](mailto:info@amga.com).*

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## GAIA GPS: MAXING YOUR MAP APP

By Mark Smiley



*Guides everywhere use the Gaia GPS app, but few take advantage of the app's powerful, lesser-known capabilities. Mark Smiley takes us down the rabbit hole of features you should be using on the regular.*

**D**URING MY 15-YEAR GUIDING CAREER THERE have been a handful of equipment “game changers.” For me these have been the Jetboil, three-antenna digital avalanche beacons, lightweight rando race boots, the Canon 5D Mark II, and Dyneema fabric. The Gaia GPS app is the latest inductee into that hall of fame, and perhaps the most noteworthy.

For readers who need an introduction, Gaia GPS is a \$20 smartphone app that finds your location, tracks your path, has worldwide downloadable satellite and topo maps, and can be used without cell phone service. Many guides use it on a daily basis because it effectively does exactly what guides need it to do.

Gaia GPS does take up a lot of phone space (satellite files can be as large as multiple gigabytes), is limited by your phone's battery life and resilience against cold, and is not as precise as a \$1,000 GPS—but it makes up for these drawbacks in cost, weight savings, and convenience.

As a phone app, Gaia GPS is weightless, utilizes your faster phone RAM to speed up map rendering time, and uses free worldwide satellite and topo maps (unlike a Garmin). My ability to view high-resolution satellite images has saved me on more than one occasion. It takes a serious dork-out session to really understand all the features that make Gaia GPS so powerful, but I promise: an hour spent making sense of the little stuff will save you many hours and miles of hiking in the wrong direction over the course of your career.

Sound like a fair trade-off? Let's dive deeper into how I use Gaia GPS for my guiding.

### 1. COMMIT TO THE APP

Even with all these obvious advantages, it took awhile for me to feel comfortable enough to fully commit to an app for my navigation needs. First, I carried both the Garmin and the app. Later, I left the Garmin at home, but I still kept it “just in case.” About a year ago, I gave the Garmin to a friend and haven't missed it since.

### 2. CHEAT YOUR BATTERY LIFE

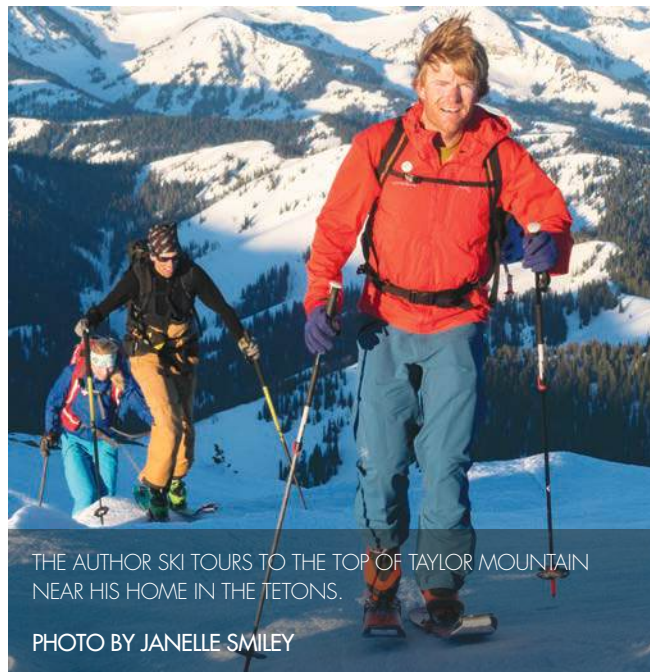
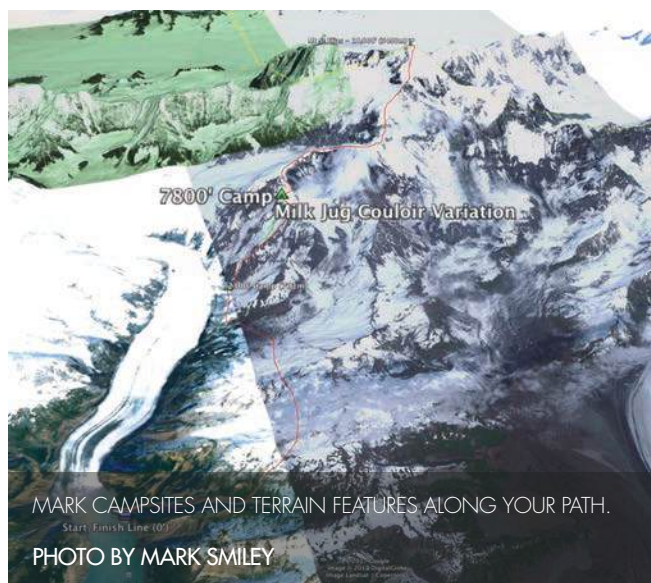
1. Bring a Goal Zero Flip 10 or Flip 20 portable battery pack with you (don't forget the cable). Or spring for a waterproof case that houses an extra battery pack.
2. Dim the screen as low as visibility allows.
3. Keep your phone in airplane mode whenever possible.
4. In Gaia, turn the compass off and turn on “Power Saving” (*navigate to Menu > Settings > Power Saving ON*).
5. Using an iPhone? Turn off location services and turn on battery low power mode.
6. Stop recharging the phone when it gets to 80 percent in the field—after that, you reach a point of diminishing returns, as getting it from 80 percent to 100 percent requires exponentially more energy.
7. Track only when necessary, as it uses about 5 percent battery per hour.
8. Keep your phone close to your body. On cold ski touring days I wear a baselayer that has a large chest pocket for that very reason, as I've found that my pant pockets are still too cold when temps drops below zero.



### 3. CREATE ROUTES

One primary use for Gaia GPS is route creation. Routes help me get acquainted with new areas before I leave. And once I'm on-site, they're the easiest way to know if I'm in the right place or veering off trail. Here's how:

1. Draw a "path" on Google Earth on your desktop. This can also be done on hillmap.com, caltopo.com, and gaiagps.com. All are fine. I like Google Earth because it's 3D, and flying around gets me stoked.
2. Refine the path line to the best of your ability.
3. Drop pins on key areas along the route path like bivy spots, water locations, and trailheads.
4. Put all pins and paths in a folder in Google Earth. Save the folder as a .KML file on your desktop.
5. From here you can import your pins and paths into Gaia directly. If you wrote a description about the pins in Google Earth, you will need to convert the .KML file to a .GPX file to preserve those descriptions. For example, on the Haute Route I have pins that have the hut phone number, how long it takes to get there, and the day's distance and elevation change. If I want to keep this information, I need to convert the Google Earth .KML file into a .GPX file.
6. To do that, you can convert the file with gpsvisualizer.com. Follow the instructions on the site. It takes about a minute your first time and 20 seconds after that.
7. Email the converted .GPX file to yourself. This is a great way to store route lines. Make them searchable by using a subject line like "Haute Route Gaia GPS route line beta."
8. Open your email on your phone, click and hold the attachment file, and select "Open in Gaia."
9. The file will autoload in the app.



### 4. DOWNLOAD MAPS

Now, you will need to download the maps that correspond with the route line you just imported so you can use the phone in airplane mode. The Garmin is preloaded with 1:100,000 scale topo maps for the U.S., but that resolution is completely, and I mean *completely*, worthless. You need 1:24,000.

I like downloading a vectored topo-line map layer at 1:24,000 resolution and a satellite map layer. You can adjust the resolution at the top of the screen when you are about to download it. It's a slider bar. The topo layer will have peak names, elevations, and trails. The satellite layer will show everything else.

### 5. DO A DOUBLE CHECK

Before I leave home, I double-check that the maps downloaded fully by closing the app and reopening it in airplane mode. If the maps load, I'm good to go.

While in the field, I will only have to reference the app quickly. I open it up, press the "locate me" crosshairs icon, and then wait about 20 seconds for the satellites to find me. I will then see where I am on the map, where the route line is, and adjust accordingly. It really is that simple.

### 6. MAXIMIZE YOUR SATELLITE RECEPTION

When you are in heavy trees or on the side of a near-vertical cliff, the GPS will not work that well. Above treeline is ideal.

### 7. GET BETTER SATELLITE IMAGES

There is a hack to get Google Earth satellite images as a layer in your app. Currently, Gaia GPS's default satellite images are subpar. With about three minutes of tinkering (that does



JANELLE SMILEY (AMGA APPRENTICE ROCK, ALPINE, AND SKI GUIDE) USES GAIA GPS TO NAVIGATE IN THE FIELD.

PHOTO BY MARK SMILEY

not void your warranty) you can access these better satellite images. Here are the instructions (and if you prefer to learn by video, there's a Vimeo link at the end of this article):

1. On your computer, create an account and log on to [gaiagps.com](http://gaiagps.com). Click your username (at the top right of the screen), and select "Map Sources" from the drop-down box.
2. Click "Import an External Map Source."
3. Name the layer "Google Earth" or whatever you prefer.

4. Scroll lower and locate "Paste your modified link here."
5. Paste this non-active link in that box: <http://mt0.google.com/vt/lyrs=s&hl=en&x={x}&y={y}&z={z}&s=Ga> (This link will not open a page in your browser—it has a different purpose.)
6. Scroll to the bottom and click "Add this map source."
7. Make sure you are signed in to your account on your phone [navigate to Menu Icon>Account>Login].
8. Restart the app.
9. Navigate to Layers Icon>More Layers (top right)>Imported >Select Google Layer.
10. You're good to go!

## 8. DELETE EXTRA MAPS BEFORE YOUR TRIP

Gaia GPS takes up a lot of space on your phone. As phones get more powerful and storage space increases, this will become less of an issue. You can always delete and re-download a satellite layer right before a trip. I delete maps of the areas I visit only on an annual basis, for example. «

*Craving a visual of all this info and more? The author created a 38-minute video tutorial on this subject that can be purchased via Vimeo On Demand. Enter code "amga" for 50% off. Promotion expires Jan 1, 2018.*

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## MASSIVE CASCADES TOUR EARNS FRONT PAGE

Over 34 days in May and June of 2017, Forest McBrian (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide) and Trevor Kostanich (AMGA Apprentice Ski Guide) completed a massive point-to-point ski tour, running north from Snoqualmie Pass in Washington to the border of Canada (almost). A deep snowpack this year set up prime conditions to attempt the route, originally envisioned and mapped out in 2013 by the pair along with American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Erin Smart. The line weaves through the heart of various Wilderness areas and North Cascades National Park, allowing for more than 200 miles of near-continuous skiing with over 100,000 total vertical feet of gain. The pair tagged a number of notable peaks along the way, including unskied lines on Dome and Whatcom. “We chose this journey as a celebration of wilderness, of friendship, and of the craft we’ve learned from our mentors over so many seasons,” McBrian said. The duo fell just short of reaching the Canadian border when a dangerous cornice blocked their last couple hundred feet of travel northward. They finished the trip by skiing to Ross Lake, chartering a boat to Highway 20, and popping a bottle of champagne to celebrate the expedition. *The Seattle Times* featured their trip on the front page. The full story is available at [seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/from-snoqualmie-pass-to-the-canadian-border-in-34-days-on-skis](http://seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/from-snoqualmie-pass-to-the-canadian-border-in-34-days-on-skis)



KOSTANICH (LEFT) AND MCBRIAN IN HIGH SPIRITS UPON REACHING A LANDMARK CHECKPOINT AT CASCADE PASS DURING THEIR 34-DAY SKI TRAVERSE.

PHOTO BY SCOTT RINCKENBERGER

## PORTER FINISHES FAMED RED LINE TRAVERSE

In May of 2017, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Jediah Porter became the first known skier to complete the fabled Red Line Traverse, a 125-mile route tracing the crest of the highest portion of California’s Sierra Nevada. The full traverse, which involved 79,100 vertical feet of elevation gain over 16 days and at least 25 serious descents,



JED PORTER TAKES IN THE VIEW ALONG THE REDLINE TRAVERSE.

PHOTO BY JED PORTER

was first conceived of in 1983, when Tom Carter, Chris Cox, and Allan Bard connected the peaks between Lone Pine to Mammoth Lakes over the course of two seasons. Porter is the first to have connected those (plus five more) in a single shot. “Athletically and technically, this traverse was harder than all the Alaska, Canadian, European, Greenlandic, and South American expeditions I’ve been on,” Porter said in a blog post on the topic. He resupplied twice and camped in the snow every night of the trip. “I hope that others can follow suit, and only raise the bar further,” he writes. Jed’s original story can be found at [wildsnow.com/22634/red-line-traverse-trip-report](http://wildsnow.com/22634/red-line-traverse-trip-report)

## GRAND TETON: 1ST DOWN SYNDROME ASCENT

On August 18, 2017, Andrew “Bob” Harris became the first person with Down syndrome to summit the Grand Teton via the Owen-Spalding route (III 5.4). Max Hammer (AMGA Apprentice Rock and Apprentice Ski Guide), also Harris’s brother-in-law, led the rope team that took Harris to the top.

Harris, Hammer, and Bob’s sister Amy, who was also on the climb, started training near their home in Reno, working on their rappelling, short-roping, and multipitch climbing efficiency as a team. “Amy and I had been planning the trip in earnest for the whole summer, though we had been brainstorming the possibility for the last couple years,” said Hammer. “From a guiding point of view, we had developed a unique style of climbing. I would either be right with Bob short-roping and short-pitching or up ahead leading and belaying from anchors for the real climbing parts. Amy was with him the entire way, either soloing around him... or on the same rope in front of him but never out of sight.”

They were accompanied by American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Zahan Billimoria—who with Nat Patridge kept Hammer and Harris updated about conditions on





14	Comments	End UTM	End Elev	Elev D	Dist	bearing	Slope Ang	Units	T
LEG									
HRF11	Vignettes Hut	603850							
HRF1	Col des Vignettes	093150	3160						
HRF2		602670							
HRF3		093100	3160		123	N		.23	
HRF3		602580							
HRF3	Base NE Ridge Petit Mt. Colan	092610	3120	-40	146	186 E		.96	
HRF4		603670							
HRF4		090970	3120	0	2	146 SE-NW		2	
HRF5		603780							
HRF5	Col d l' Eveque	090030	3270	+150	.9	174 NE		2.4	
HRF6		604410							
HRF6	Top break down	089700	3380	+110	.7	120 N		1.8	
HRF7		603000							
HRF7	Base NE Ridge La Vierge	091830	3200	-190	.6	78 E		2.4	
HRF8		606200							
HRF8		090410	2920	-280	1.4	66 NE		4.2	
HRF9		609200							
HRF9	Col du M Brule	090130	3120	+200	1.9	98 NW		3.9	
HRF10		609340							
HRF10	Base E. Ridge Pointe de la Gde Aile	090700	3230	+110	.15	SW		1.25	
HRF11		60470							
HRF11		090760	3130	-100	.6	11 E		1.6	
HRF12		608750							
HRF12	Col de Valpeltine	092040	3160	+30	1.3	11 E-S		1.6	
HRF13		610800							
HRF13	Trav R across Stock	092720	3555	+395	2.15	72 SW-NW		6.1	
HRF14		612150							
HRF14		093800	3200	-355	1.8	52 NE		5.1	
HRF15		612370							
HRF15		092870	3000	-200	.95	168 E-SE		3	
HRF16		613800							
HRF16		092800	2840	+160		59 NE		2.1	
HRF17		614150							
HRF17		091150	2640	0		52 NE		2	
HRF18		614725							
HRF18		092000	2720	-70		15 103 NE			
HRF19		619710							
HRF19		092000	2720	-40	4	5 E			
HRF20		620010							
HRF20	Biel	095050	2080	-140	2	82 E-N			
HRF21		092750							
HRF21	Furi	094620	1862	-212	2.8	NE			

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HARRIS SMILES BETWEEN HIS SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW ON THE SUMMIT OF THE GRAND.

PHOTO BY MARK FISHER AT FISHER CREATIVE

the Grand throughout the summer—and several film and media personnel. The trio reached the summit after a 12-hour push from Lupine Meadows.

“At the top, Bob was buzzing with an energy I haven’t seen in him before: uncontainable joy and pride,” Hammer said. “I think it’s imperative to look at a company such as Exum for a positive example: when I brought this idea to Nat Patridge, he did not bat an eye.” He says the response from new parents with kids with Down syndrome has been overwhelming, and Bob’s summit shows what’s possible for those individuals.

“Bob has taught me lessons in humility, patience, health and fitness, and human character I would not have learned otherwise,” Hammer says. “I encourage any guides to take or create an opportunity to climb with someone in the DS community; it will surely change their life perspective for the better.”

## CONGRATULATIONS NEWLY CERTIFIED GUIDES!

January 1 – September 30, 2017

### Rock Instructor

Mark Folsom  
Christian Helger  
Patricia Lankhorst

### Rock Guide

Jeremy Devine  
Josh Gross  
Garrick Hart  
Matthew Hartman  
Gary Newmeyer  
Tristan Perry  
Wade Spiner  
Travis Weil

### Ski Guide

Bill Allen  
Tim Cohn  
Daniel Corn  
Aaron Diamond  
Jeff Dobronyi  
Ian Fowler  
Kurt Hicks  
Raymond Hughes  
Andrew Kiefer  
Paul Koubek  
Mike Lewis  
Geoff Lodge  
Andreas Polloczek  
Jonathan Preuss  
D. Brenton Reagan  
Austin Shannon  
Robert Smith

### Alpine Guide

Josh Beckner  
Jake Beren  
Zahan Billimoria  
Karen Bockel  
Brent Butler  
Ian Fowler  
Raymond Hughes  
Keith Moon  
Logan Talbott

### IFMGA

Dan Corn (121)  
Andreas Polloczek (122)  
Kurt Hicks (123)  
Austin Shannon (124)  
Paul Koubek (125)  
Mike Lewis (126)  
Logan Talbott (127)  
Ian Fowler (128)  
Karen Bockel (129)  
Zahan Billimoria (130)  
Brent Butler (131)

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Swis Stockton  
Travis Weil

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# Alpinist 60

JAMES EDWARD MELES HONORS HUGHES REAUZELLE  
JOSHUA SULLIVAN VENTURES INTO THE BLUE  
DAVID ROBERTS REVISITS FONTAINEBLEAU  
LEIGHAN TALLEY TAKES FLIGHT



NEW SHOVEL STANDARDS REFLECT DURABILITY AND STRENGTH TESTING IN A VARIETY OF SCENARIOS.

PHOTO BY NATE EMERSON



### UIAA RELEASES SHOVEL SAFETY STANDARDS

In July of 2017, the UIAA released an official set of international safety and testing standards for avalanche shovels in response to repeated anecdotal evidence of shovels breaking in the field. According to UIAA Safety Commission president Dave Custer, this is the first shovel standard released by the UIAA. “The process started about a

decade ago with the observations that if 100 shovels go on a weekend avalanche training course, many go home in a trash bag,” Custer said.

Ben Pritchett, lead forecaster with Crested Butte Avalanche Center, said this is likely the maturation of Manuel Genswein’s avalanche-shovel tests, which demonstrated the failure of a number of brands of shovels under pressure, especially when kicked into hard snow to aid in digging. “Given an evolving understanding of how to most efficiently break up consolidated snow (by stomping, then prying, uphill of the hole), older shovels simply weren’t up to the task,” Pritchett said. “[These new standards involve] more rigorous strength standards and testing criteria designed to match modern aggressive shoveling techniques.”

Standards cover everything from the size of the holes allowed in the shaft of a shovel (must be wide enough that an inserted 7mm or 12mm probe is easily released; ends of tubular shafts must be capped) to shovel length and area requirements (75cm; 500cm<sup>2</sup>). Custer says most existing shovels comply with the new requirements, but avalanche professionals should still double-check their own models. The standards can be read in their entirety at [theuiaa.org/safety-standards](http://theuiaa.org/safety-standards). «

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## FEATURED TECH VIDEO: MULTI-V-THREAD ANCHOR REFRESHER

AMGA Instructor Team member Patrick Ormond demonstrates how to build multi-V-thread anchors to leave for the whole season. By building multi-V-thread anchors we do a service to the community by leaving a permanent anchor on popular routes where it would be impossible to drill holes and V-threads every time the route is climbed.

1. Find a good piece of ice that's protected from the sun as well as from new ice formation if possible.
2. Drill your V-threads.
3. Thread the anchor, join with a good knot, equalize it, and add a quick link to the master point.

See the video at [amga.com/member-ice-videos/](http://amga.com/member-ice-videos/).



PATRICK ORMOND EXPLAINS PERMANENT MULTI-V-THREAD ANCHORS IN THIS FEATURED TECH VIDEO.

## ALPINE DISCIPLINE MENTORSHIP CAMP

Japhy Dhungana and Elaina Arenz recently traveled to Mt. Baker, Washington, to participate in the first-ever Alpine Discipline Mentorship Camp. On August 23 and 24 the participants worked closely with Instructor Team member Jeff Ward to hone their skills as AMGA Apprentice Alpine Guides and to help prepare for their next program.

### What was the most valuable part of the Mentorship Camp?

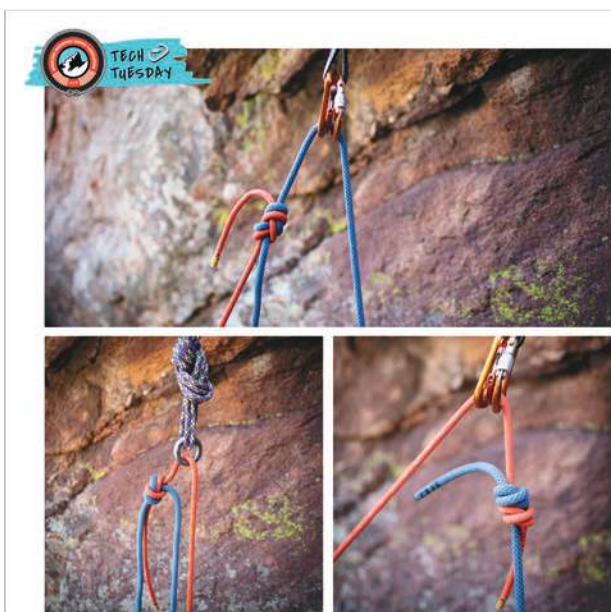
**JD:** Climbing the North Ridge of Mt. Baker allowed for so many transitions: from glacier mode to pitched snow climbing to short-roping, back to glacier mode, to parallel pitched ice climbing, back to pitched end-roping, and every permutation of this! I gained valuable feedback on how to make these transitions smoother and more efficient, as well as how to refine my judgment on exactly what transition to choose for the terrain. Rather than “giving the answers away” at each junction, Jeff helped Elaina and I assess the terrain, the conditions, and the clients, and pointed out that there is no black-and-white process to decide on how to guide a certain section.

**EA:** When you stop looking, you stop learning. You get tunnel vision. One example that came up time and again is using your phone's mapping or GPS to “see” where you are. But there is no better way to determine this than by being aware of your surroundings by using your eyes to take it all in.

This became painfully apparent when I discovered I had left my route plan back in the car at the trailhead. Rookie mistake. Sometimes our mistakes present us with the greatest learning opportunities.

At first I thought I would be lost without my plan, but I actually learned that I had many other tools at my disposal to fall back on. I had recorded all of that information on paper, and through that process I was able to commit the major details to memory.

To check out the full details of Arenz and Dhungana's experiences, go to [amga.com/2017-arcteryxamga-alpine-discipline-mentorship-camp-japhy-dhungana/](http://amga.com/2017-arcteryxamga-alpine-discipline-mentorship-camp-japhy-dhungana/) and [amga.com/2017-arcteryxamga-alpine-discipline-mentorship-camp-elaina-arenz/](http://amga.com/2017-arcteryxamga-alpine-discipline-mentorship-camp-elaina-arenz/)



## FEATURED TECH TIP: “JOINING ROPES”

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for weekly #amgatechtuesday Tech Tips.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO JOIN TWO ROPES, BUT DIFFERENT KNOTS HAVE SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS. USE A DOUBLE FISHERMAN'S (LOWER RIGHT) OR FLEMISH BEND (TOP) FOR TOPROPING AND JOINING CORD. BOTH ARE EQUALLY EFFECTIVE, THOUGH THE FLEMISH BEND IS SLIGHTLY EASIER TO UNTIE. USE A WELL-DRESSED FLAT OVERHAND (LOWER LEFT) FOR RAPPELLING.

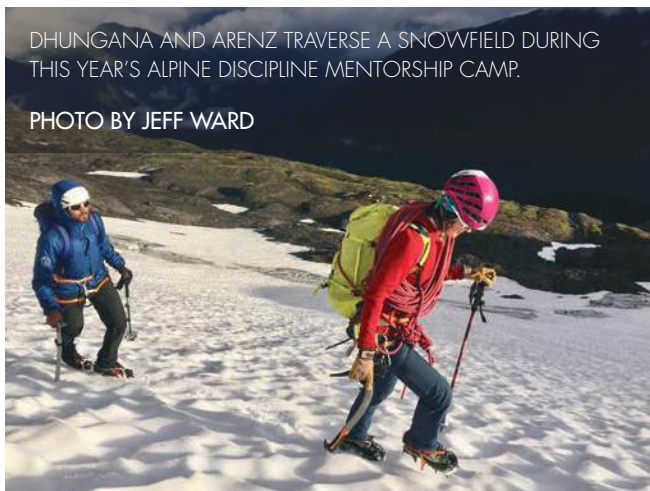
## MEMBERSHIP DOCUMENTS PAGE

As of spring 2017, You can find information about setting up a re-exam, copies of our board minutes, details about the new Rock Rescue Drill, your Pro Purchase Program, and more under Member Documents on the bottom of your myAMGA profile. If there's other information you'd like to see on this page, please email the AMGA at [info@amga.com](mailto:info@amga.com).



DHUNGANA AND ARENZ TRAVERSE A SNOWFIELD DURING THIS YEAR'S ALPINE DISCIPLINE MENTORSHIP CAMP.

PHOTO BY JEFF WARD



The Alpine Discipline Mentorship Camp is made possible by the generous support of Arc'teryx.

### ROCK DISCIPLINE MENTORSHIP CAMP

On September 6 and 7, 2017, Cody Bradford and Casey Graham participated in the Rock Discipline Mentorship Camp with AMGA Instructor Team members Mike Soucy and Eric Whewell. Both participants are Assistant Rock Guides and utilized this time to help prep for their Rock Guide Exams and dial in skills learned on the Advanced Rock Guide Course/Aspirant Exam. They also attended a casual BBQ with the AMGA staff, local guides, and IT members.

#### **What was the most valuable part of the Mentorship Camp?**

**CG:** *At a macro level, I learned to breathe easy when it comes to the exam. I know the areas in which I need to improve, and as long as I can gain further confidence in them before my exam, the rest can go on like a regular day of guiding. At a micro level—thanks to a specific transition I performed and debriefed coming off a sharp summit to a lower—I learned to look at certain rock terrain as though it were alpine and not “just a rock climb.”*

**CB:** *I found out what it was to make mistakes and turn them into opportunities. I found myself wanting to not make a mistake and subsequently overthinking and choosing an inappropriate path to success. This camp helped me to understand the value of listening to my instincts, testing them, and re-evaluating if they proved to be misguided. And, sometimes a misjudged path becomes an excellent view for the guests and an opportunity for learning for them as well as for the guide. After all, it is not only us who want to learn about the mountains.*

To read more about Bradford and Graham's experiences, visit [amga.com/2017-eddie-baueramga-rock-discipline-mentorship-camp-casey-graham/](http://amga.com/2017-eddie-baueramga-rock-discipline-mentorship-camp-casey-graham/)

The Rock Discipline Mentorship camp is made possible by the generous support of Eddie Bauer.

### MEET THE NEW GUIDE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

We are thrilled to welcome Jesse Littleton to the team as the new guide program coordinator.

The Guide Program Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day logistics of the Mountain Guide Program. Jesse comes to the AMGA from St. Paul, Minnesota, where he served as senior logistics coordinator at the Voyager Outward Bound School. Jesse is an AMGA Apprentice Rock Guide, Certified Single Pitch Instructor, and has been an AMGA member since 2009. He brings with him a passion for helping others and doing work that supports outdoor programming from behind the scenes. Jesse loves to rock climb and is looking forward to doing more downhill and backcountry skiing in the Front Range. If you have any questions about applying to Mountain Guide Programs, feel free to reach out to Jesse at [Jesse@amga.com](mailto:Jesse@amga.com).

### CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM (CIP) UPDATE

In the first six months of 2017, CWI courses had 210 participants, SPI courses had 327, and SPI assessments had 303. These numbers are down by about 5 percent from this time last year, but 2016 was a record year for participants on CIP courses and assessments. Late summer and fall are typically the busiest time of year for the CIP, and those numbers are yet to be logged.

When SPI designers changed the Top Rope Site Manager program to the SPI program, one of their goals was to encourage more Single Pitch Instructors to further their training with the Mountain Guide Program. The AMGA has seen that goal come to fruition over the past several years, and that success continues into 2017. On this year's Rock Guide Courses, 34 of the 48 participants (about 71 percent) were SPIs. Also, in the first half of the year, four of the eight newly certified Rock Guides began their AMGA training in the Climbing Instructor Program.



JESSE LITTLETON JOINS AMGA AS THE NEW GUIDE PROGRAM COORDINATOR.

PHOTO BY JESSE LITTLETON



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## MEMBERSHIP BY GENDER

There's growing market demand for female guides and instructors and a strong interest within the AMGA membership in increasing the number of women in our ranks. While the AMGA is ahead of other IFMGA countries in terms of the percentage of female guides and instructors, this doesn't mean we do not have work to do—we would love to recruit more women into the field!

Want to get involved? Have ideas on how we can increase the number of women interested in entering the guiding or climbing-instruction profession? Email [info@amga.com](mailto:info@amga.com).

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

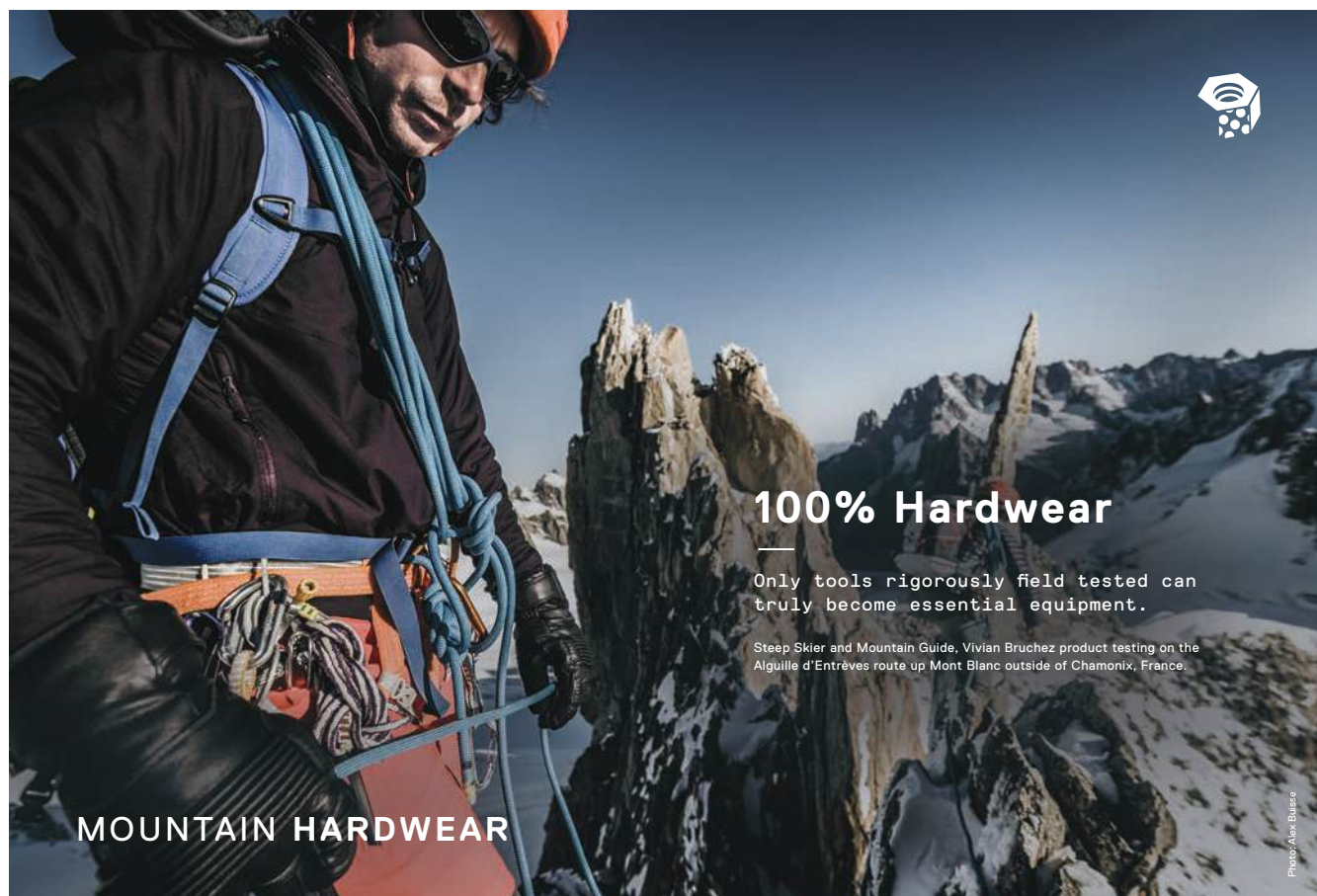
The AMGA congratulates new Board members Angela Hawse (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide), Paul Koubek (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide), and Matt Shove (AMGA Rock Instructor, Assistant Alpine Guide, SPI & CWI Provider), as well as reelected members Sarah Carpenter (AMGA Ski Guide) and Geoff Unger (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide).

These Board members were seated at the October 27, 2017 Board of Directors meeting in Salt Lake City. At that meeting, the following officers were voted in: Rob Hess

### Current membership statistics for Certified Guides and Instructors as of 10/1/17

Certified Guides				
Certification	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Rock Guide	22	202	224	10%
Ski Guide	13	163	176	7%
Alpine Guide	10	163	173	6%
Totals	45	528	573	8%
IFMGA Guide	9	113	122	7%
Certified Instructors				
Rock Instructor	13	124	137	9%
Single Pitch Instructor	141	1019	1160	12%
Climbing Wall Instructor (Lead)	67	212	279	24%
Climbing Wall Instructor (TR)	39	89	128	30%
Totals	260	1444	1567	17%
Certified Guides & Instructors Combined				
Totals Combined Certified Guides & Instructors	305	1972	2140	14%

(President), Angela Hawse (Vice President), Margaret Wheeler (Secretary), and Scott Soden (Treasurer). Silas Rossi will remain on the Board, but is no longer serving as Vice President. Outgoing Board members are Kurt Hicks and Eric Larson. The AMGA would like to thank them, and all the volunteer Board members and officers, for their service to the association. «



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Steep Skier and Mountain Guide, Vivian Bruchez product testing on the Alguille d'Entrèves route up Mont Blanc outside of Chamonix, France.

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Photo: Alan Bulgaro

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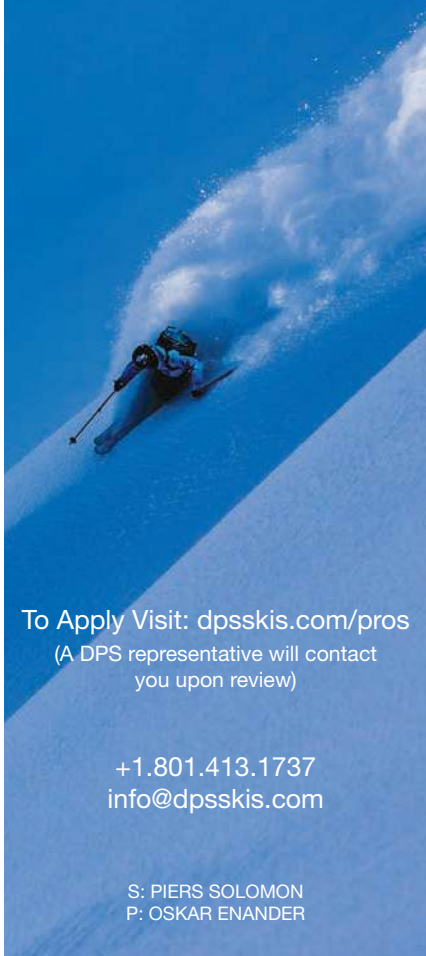


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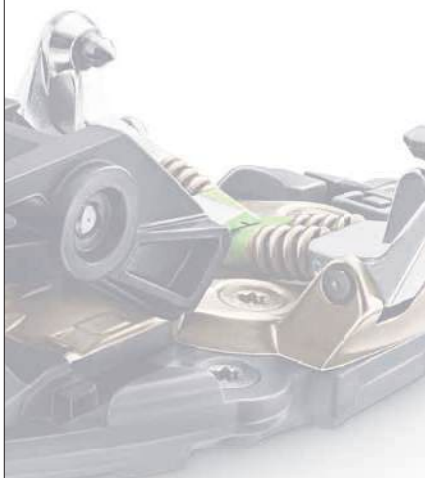
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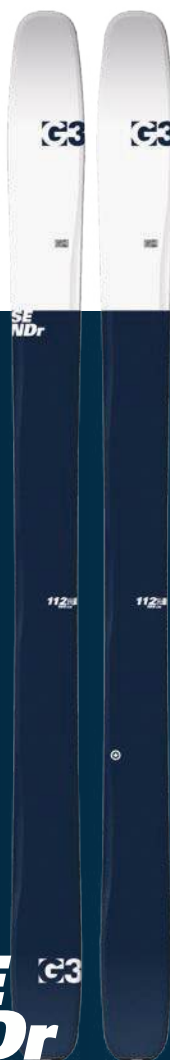


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*by Angela Hawse, Sterling Team  
Athlete, Co-owner of Chicks  
Climbing and IFMGA/AMGA Guide*

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To read the full article and check out the Pico Kit, visit [SterlingRope.com/climb](http://SterlingRope.com/climb).

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Charles and Judy Goldman	Peter Lardy	Erin Weimer



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# WSD-F20

## Smart Outdoor Watch **PRO TREK** Smart androidwear



### Dual-layer LCD

The display uses a two-layer structure consisting of monochrome liquid-crystal overlaid with color liquid-crystal. The monochrome liquid-crystal permanently shows the time, while the color liquid-crystal displays maps, measurements and apps.

### MIL STANDARD-compliant

The watch's resistance to environmental conditions complies with the MIL-STD-810G environmental test standard stipulated by the US Department of Defense. This testing checks that the watch operates normally under a wide range of environmental stresses, including being dropped and subjected to vibration, and that it can handle the tough demands of outdoor use.

### Location Memory

Links with the GPS function to accurately display local places and track your movements, as well as allowing you to record specific locations.



#### Knowing Where you Are

The color map display means you can always see where you are.

Downloading the maps beforehand allows you to check your location on the map even when your smartphone is out of signal range.



#### Recording Memory on Maps

You can use the "TOOL" and "APP" buttons to zoom the map in or out.

You can also use the tracking marks and voice input to leave text memos on the map.



### TOOL button

Calls up tools such as the compass or altimeter and can be assigned to any app.



Direction  
Measurement



Altitude  
Measurement



Atmospheric  
Pressure  
Measurement

### APP button

Can be assigned to any app.

## androidwear

### Android Wear™ APP

As well as notifications and responses to incoming email and calls, the phone supports a range of apps and services provided by Google™.

**GPS** **Bluetooth®**

### Water Resistant to 50 Meters

Size: 61.7 x 57.7 mm (H x W) Thickness: 15.3 mm Weight: 92 g

\* Android Wear, Google and other product names are trademarks of Google Inc.

\* Some functions are not available when the phone is connected to an iOS device.





# OWNING YOUR TANGLES

By Rob Coppelillo

“YOU GOTTA KEEP THAT BRAKE HAND ON THE ROPE.”

He’s trying to detangle the brake strand as it feeds off the stack. He’s using both hands. He’s no longer belaying me. I’m leading. I’m working.

You gotta keep that brake hand on the rope, I said. I think about my choice of words after I reach a stance, build an anchor, and bring my guest up. The word hangs in the air like chalk dust after a crux: *You*.

• • •

It’s an easy trick we play, ceding ownership to someone or something else. In relationships, politics, and in writing—I even did it here in this story. An early draft relayed an anecdote about somebody else, rather than myself.

What am I getting at? It’s easy to blame anybody, anything other than ourselves. My guest gave me a terrible belay. The French sandbagged me on that descent. The map was off. The examiner hated me. The vocabulary changes, but the gist is the same: forces beyond my control were responsible for my failure. Anything, anybody but me.

Have you seen this guy making the rounds at the moment, Jocko Willink? Google him; he’s a Navy SEAL, 235 pounds of bipedal asskickery, a black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, laser-focused stare, chest like a 55-gallon drum of beatdown, hands like anvils wrapped in the raw flesh of slaughtered kittens. Don’t bother following him on Instagram, though. He posts almost nothing but pics of his wristwatch at 04:30—the hour at which he awakes to do burpees and swing kettlebells. Before the rest of us awake, he devours the weak, sucks the souls from his enemies, chews broken glass, and breaks

skinny-ass guides like off-brand pixie sticks.

OK, I’m hyping him a bit, but consider his 2015 bestseller, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win*. I won’t summarize the book except to say that taking responsibility for the things that happen around you leads to excellence. Blaming stuff on everybody else leads to suckage. We choose between the two every time we take somebody’s money to lead them in the mountains.

It would be easy to blame my guest belayer—it was, in my head—come on, man, detangle as you go, simple as pie. Stop shorting me on the rope, man, I’m leading up here!

The blame flows so easily, but then Jocko rasps in my ear, “How about a cleaner stack, bro? Make the guest’s life easier. That’s when you’ll get your perfect belay, ya punk.”

Own that tangle, from 20 meters up the pitch, I remind myself. I could’ve restacked the rope. I could’ve set up the gent with a more comfortable stance. Given a better orientation. Own it.

In short, when my whiny inner voice begins to blame, I try to choke him out. I replace it with that inflated sense of potency and competence only a mountain guide possesses. I can control my belayer’s brake hand from a rope-length away. Become the Jedi; channel your Obi-Wan Kenobi. These are not the ‘droids you’re looking for. Answer the question before it is asked. Control everything. Own everything.

Own your successes, too. But when the time comes, debrief your days and own your mistakes, your near-misses, the less-than-perfect moments for your guests. This is the way to deliver the goods, the righteous path to staying alive on the job. Ownership... extreme ownership if you’re into it. See if it works for you. «





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