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GUIDE BULLETIN

GIVE (AND TAKE) FEEDBACK LIKE A PRO

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NUTRITION FOR BIG MOUNTAIN DAYS

JOE STOCK: THE GUIDING LIFE

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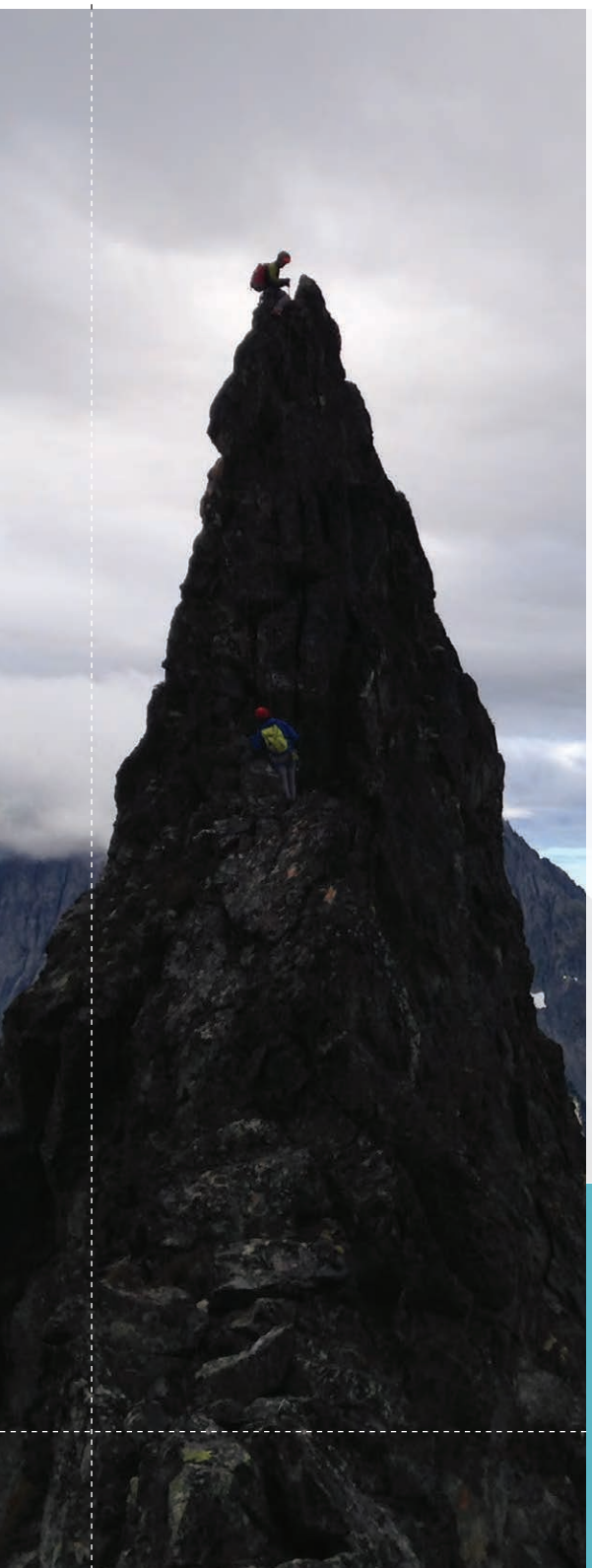

On the cover: Miranda Oakley (AMGA Rock Guide and Mountain Hardwear athlete) climbs perfect granite at Pine Creek near her stomping grounds of Bishop, CA. PHOTO BY CALDER DAVEY

This page: Geoff Schellens (AMGA Rock Guide, Assistant Alpine Guide) on a Cascades ridgeline during an AMGA Advanced Alpine Guide Course. PHOTO BY JOSH BECKNER (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)

GUIDE
BULLETIN

GUIDE Bulletin

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LAST FALL, AT THEIR ANNUAL TRAINING, AMERICA'S LEADING GUIDES—the AMGA Instructor Team—got a crash course on overcoming their own unconscious bias. Nationally recognized workplace inclusivity expert Kathleen Nalty facilitated a powerful session with assistance from Canadian IFMGA Mountain Guide Colin Zacharias. This workshop kicked off a broad effort to make our association more supportive and welcoming to everybody.

The AMGA is proud to have a greater percentage of female members than any other IFMGA country (and was recently cited by *Outside* magazine as a model for reducing sexual harassment in guiding), but we can do better.

We've had a chance to digest the ideas from the annual training, and we know that the AMGA and American guiding will be stronger when our membership is a better reflection of our nation's diverse population. The AMGA Board has taken the lead in establishing inclusivity as a priority, but success requires the engagement of all members.

To jumpstart change, I'm signing the Camber Outdoors CEO pledge, committing myself and the AMGA to some fundamental inclusivity steps. I'm proud to align us with Camber (formerly the Outdoor Industry Women's Coalition) as it works toward a more inclusive and innovative outdoor industry. Perhaps more exciting is an unprecedented gift from the First Ascent Charitable Foundation that will allow us to triple the number of women's specific scholarships. Twelve annual scholarships will now support women in the Mountain Guide Programs.

Although the AMGA's current focus is on gender inclusivity, we also have work to do in making our association more broadly welcoming and accessible. I envision an AMGA that includes greater racial and ethnic diversity, more LGBTQ members, increased access for veterans, and better support for members with children and from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. I'll be working with the Board, Inclusivity Committee, members, and staff to come up with bold next steps to further this vision.

The AMGA is a community of lifelong learners. One of my favorite things about my role is that I'm able to work with all of you to keep learning and growing in new directions. In my last "Director's Corner," I wrote about learning on the sharp end as an AMGA student. Now I'm excited to learn, along with all of you, how to build a more diverse and inclusive association. It's a long route ahead of us, and I welcome your input and assistance with this effort.

Onward,

Alex Kosseff

Alex Kosseff, AMGA Executive Director
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IT'S ABOUT THE CLIMBING, BUT EVEN MORE SO ABOUT THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES ALONG THE WAY, LIKE THIS SUNSET ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF MOUNT BAKER DURING THE AMGA ALPINE SKILLS COURSE.

PHOTO BY KT MILLER (AMGA APPRENTICE SKI GUIDE, APPRENTICE ALPINE GUIDE)

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PHOTOS BY: [TOP TO BOTTOM] KATIE LARSEN, KARL BIRKELAND, DYLAN TAYLOR, TIM CARTWRIGHT

Matthew Larsen — **EQUIPPED** — Kalispell, Montana

Matthew is an AMGA Apprentice Alpine Guide, Apprentice Ski Guide, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Licensed Nutritionist, Certified Diabetes Educator, Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician, husband, and father. Over the past few years, he has been involved with the Inyo County (Bishop, CA) Search and Rescue as a technical rescue and medical team member. He recently returned to Montana to raise his daughter, Svea, in the Rocky Mountains.

Winslow Passey — **EQUIPPED** — Salt Lake City, Utah

Winslow is an AMGA Ski Guide, yoga instructor, and health coach who enjoys teaching others how to reach their highest levels of health—mentally, physically, and spiritually. She's used these habits to heal her body and uplift the health of her whole family. Now, she guides others who want to feel their best, not only in the mountains, but also in life.

Joe Stock — **THE GUIDING LIFE** — Anchorage, Alaska

Joe is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide with 30 years of climbing and skiing experience around the world. Joe has an undergraduate degree in geology and geography from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand and a graduate degree in watershed science from Colorado State University. The second edition of his backcountry skiing guidebook for Southcentral Alaska, *The Alaska Factor*, was published in 2016. Joe lives with his wife, Cathy, and their Really Bad Orange Cat.

Dylan Taylor — **GIVE AND TAKE** — Chamonix, France

Dylan grew up in the hills around Boulder, Colorado, where he caught the skiing and climbing bug in high school. He studied geology in college, and worked briefly as a mine geologist in Nevada before starting a mountain guiding career in the North Cascades and abroad. Dylan now works as an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide. In most years, he combines his guiding skill set with his science background, and manages field safety for geologists in Antarctica for a month or two.

REMSBERG BUCKS THE #VANLIFE TRADITION WITH A TOW-BEHIND TRAILER.

HOME IS WHERE YOU PARK IT

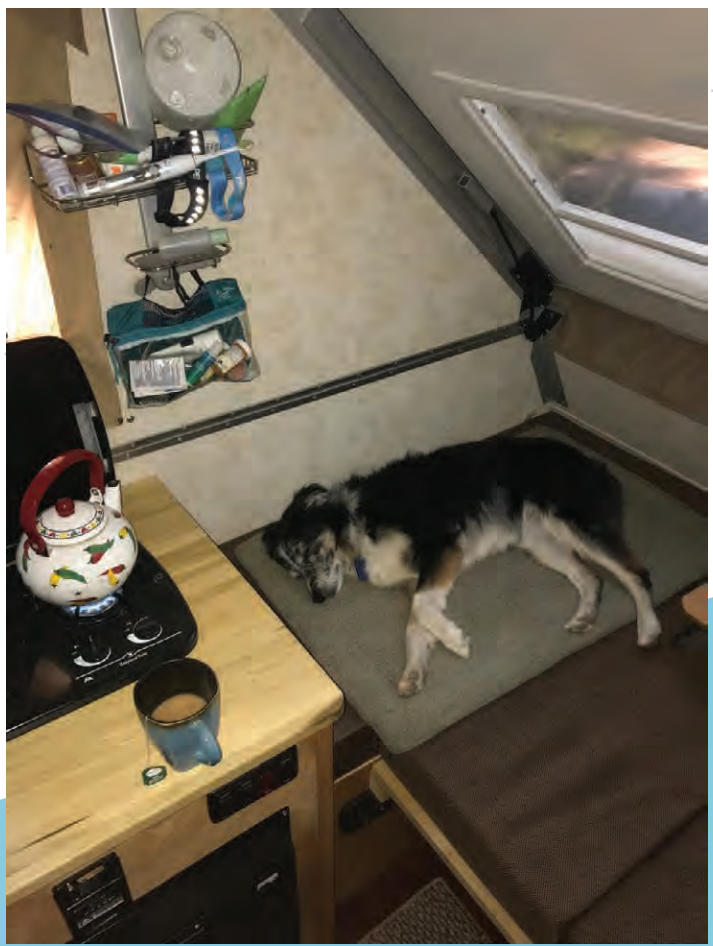
Guide rigs make life on the road (and at the crag) a little sweeter

When you spend much of the year on the road, it's crucial to have a comfy place to crash at the end of a long day. From snug to spacious, here are five well-loved vehicles that you might just spot at the crag.

Thanks to the guides featured for providing photos of their rigs

Guide: Dale Remsberg, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide
Rig Name: Base Camp
Make & Model: 2015 Aliner Offroad Trailer
Mileage: 1,700

I love my rig because... I'd been a van guy my entire 25-year guiding career ('84 Volkswagen Westy, then a '95 Eurovan). Finally, I decided to buck the #vanlife and go with a tow-behind trailer. This works great for me—I can travel somewhere and set up my camp, and then have my Toyota Tacoma free for off-roading to remote rock and ice climbs. It's a little slower to set up (although my Aliner trailer sets up in under 15 minutes), but way more comfortable. I also get a ton of storage capacity in the trailer and in my truck, and I don't have to shuffle gear around to sleep or make room for a dance party (yep, we have a small disco ball). I added a hot-water heater for the sink and outside shower, plus a moveable solar panel with a 30-foot cord so I can park in the shade but still charge my rig. And, of course, Indie the dog gets her own bed.



[TOP] BASE CAMP'S SURPRISINGLY ROOMY INTERIOR.
[BOTTOM] FORTUNATELY, THERE'S ROOM FOR A DOG BED.

TUCHOLKE POSES WITH HER F-350 AND NORTHERN LITE 4-SEASON CAMPER.

Guide: Mia Tucholke, AMGA Rock Guide, Assistant Ski Guide, Apprentice Alpine Guide
Rig Name: The Big Rig
Make & Model: 2012 Ford F-350 with a Northern Lite 8-11 Sportsman 4-Season truck camper
Mileage: 60,000

I love my rig because... A 4x4 truck makes it easy to get to otherwise inaccessible places (like Hyalite Canyon). If things get desperate or I'm setting up base camp, I can easily take the camper off (it takes minutes) and continue on. The camper is light, and it fits perfectly on a short-bed truck—it has all the comforts of a nice RV in a tight package. I love having a large freezer for ice cream and popsicles when I'm out in the desert. (Plus, it's always a big hit with anyone else around.) The small bathroom—it has a shower!—is perfect for storing, hanging, and drying wet gear during the winter months. I can easily "entertain" four people inside without feeling cramped or having to sit on the bed (which, by the way, is a queen). A good-sized solar panel keeps batteries going so I can use my laptop or crank music. I even have a disco ball for dance parties, Swedish-style! *[Ed: Disco balls in guide rigs are apparently a popular accessory.]*

[MIDDLE] BIG RIG'S COZY SLEEPING QUARTERS.[BOTTOM] THE BIG RIG IS COMPLETE WITH A BONUS SKI-STORAGE COMPARTMENT AND A HITCH FOR A BIKE RACK.

Guide: Peter Leh, AMGA Ski Guide
Rig Name: None
Make & Model: 1993 Subaru Legacy 5-speed manual 2200cc
Mileage: 136,000

I love my rig because... First and foremost, I only paid $3,000 for it, and at the time it had just 96,000 miles. I can sleep in it—plywood slides over the void. The back hatch opens completely, thanks to the lifted Thule pod. This also means the roof rack sits farther back, so it's more aerodynamic. The roof and front hood are painted with flat paint and a roller. It's been dependable for 40,000 miles. It's got 4WD, cruise control, and bright LED headlights.

[TOP] THE THULE POD'S LIFITING IN THE BACK MEANS THE BACK HATCH CAN OPEN COMPLETELY. [LEFT] HOME IS WHERE YOU PUT YOUR THERM-A-REST.

THE NO-BELLS-AND-WHISTLES LEGACY HAS EVERYTHING LEH NEEDS, AND NOTHING HE DOESN'T.

HITCH AND HIS RIG.

HITCH MAKES EFFICIENT USE OF SPACE. SEEN HERE ARE THE KITCHEN, PANTRY, WATER STORAGE, BEDROOM, GEAR ROOM, FRONT PORCH, AND LIVING ROOM (WITH DUFFEL BAG COUCH).

Guide: Noah Hitch, AMGA Apprentice Alpine Guide, SPI
Rig Name: Lola (after the song by The Kinks)
Make & Model: 1999 Toyota Tacoma
Mileage: 211,349

> **I love my rig because...** It allows me the freedom to live anywhere. Whether it's snowy, rainy, or sandy, I can rely on Lola to keep me warm and dry. It's great for stealth camping, and it's enabled me to cut down on travel costs for courses, conferences, and climbing trips. I enjoy the simplicity of living in my truck, and it has ensured that I don't accumulate too much stuff in my life—I can still fit everything I own in the back. Overall, Lola has enabled me to live a happy, nomadic lifestyle of skiing, climbing, and guiding.

LOLA IN PROFILE.

Have your own story? Send it to us, and we'll share it with the guiding community: info@amga.com «

DOWNSIZING HIS WHOLE WARDROBE (MINUS PUFFY JACKETS AND SHELLS) TO FIT IN ONE DRAWER WAS ONE OF THE MORE CHALLENGING STEPS FOR FOWLER TO MOVE INTO HIS RAV 4.

RAV IN ALL ITS GLORY.

FANCY SCOTCH AND MOOD LIGHTING IN THE THEATER ROOM—DO YOU HAVE ALL THAT IN YOUR APARTMENT?

For a virtual tour of Jonathon Spitzer's (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide) Sprinter Van: amga.com/amga-mobile-cribs/

Guide: Wesley Fowler, AMGA Apprentice Rock Guide, SPI

Rig Name: Rav
Make & Model: 2010 Toyota RAV4
Mileage: 95,000

I love my rig because... it's everything I need and nothing more. I've been interested in a mobile, minimalist lifestyle for as long as I can remember. When I moved to Colorado from Florida, I dreamed of saving up to build out a fancy van. But as my interest in guiding grew, my need to save money for courses and exams became a priority. Two years ago, I moved into my RAV4 full-time to save, and to see if I really had what it takes to live the lifestyle I had been dreaming of. I was skeptical of its size at the beginning, but my RAV has turned out to be large enough for all the gear I need to climb and ski year-round, with enough space left over for a girlfriend! My build-out is pretty simple: I removed the rear seats to create more storage, and built a simple bed frame with a large clothing drawer. The whole system can be removed without disassembly, and fits a cushy six-inch mattress. I also bought the largest roof box I could find (living in my SUV wouldn't be possible without it). All the rear windows are insulated, and I've put in a few extra lights in the back. If my RAV proves anything, it's that you don't have to go out and buy a fancy van to create a quality adventure rig!

GIVE AND TAKE:

THE ART OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK *By Dylan Taylor*

ONE OF THE TOUGHEST ASPECTS OF GUIDING IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT. INSTRUCTOR TEAM MEMBER DYLAN TAYLOR BREAKS DOWN HOW TO GIVE—AND, JUST AS IMPORTANT, RECEIVE—USEFUL FEEDBACK.

STUDENTS ON A ROCK GUIDE COURSE PRACTICE THEIR TECHNICAL SKILLS ON A CLASSIC ROUTE AT SMITH ROCKS—THEY'LL RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THEIR PERFORMANCE THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM.

PHOTO BY PETE KEANE (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)

A FEW MONTHS AGO, MY GIRLFRIEND, MARINE, AND I WENT TO Dahkla, a beach in Morocco, to learn to kite surf. I came back with a razor clam stuck in my foot—and a concept of what bad teacher-student feedback is all about.

I'd been guiding for 18 years, and I hadn't really been a student in ages. Fed by my ego and my paragliding expertise (kite surfing and paragliding are basically the same, right?), I expected an easy go of things. After three days of crashing into the ocean while a Moroccan instructor unhelpfully yelled "MORE POWER" at me, I left with a better understanding of the learning process—and just how frustrating insufficient feedback can be.

As guides, we live in a world where the ability to give (and receive) clear feedback is a means to improve our job proficiency and risk-management strategy. For most of us, it starts with the mental gymnastics of processing feedback during our AMGA programs. Then, we learn to adapt our ability to give and receive feedback as we work with colleagues at various guide services. Finally, many of us call ourselves "instructors," and our guests benefit from our ability to critique their ski skills, their hand-jamming performance, or maybe the implications of their interpersonal skills on a Denali expedition.

Let's face it: on-the-job feedback is just plain tough. Few of us are gifted at telling our peers, friends, or colleagues that they could do their job a little better, and few of us enjoy getting frank feedback from others. Even the term "feedback" triggers something in us; it reminds us guides of daily debriefs and end-of-exam critiques—it can be awkward. Those giving it often feel they were never frank enough; those receiving it often feel something was missing, like a compliment, or even brutal honesty.

There's some irony here: I'm writing an article about giving better feedback, and yet it's one of my greatest self-identified weaknesses. Rather than confabulate, I chose a handful of fellow AMGA and ACMG guides, instructors, and examiners to give me their impressions of what it's like on both sides of the feedback process. Here's what I've learned about the fine art of feedback, from discussions with my colleagues as well as my own experiences.

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Set expectations. According to American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Christian Santelices, providing expectations up front can help mitigate a guest's or mentee's reactions to feedback when it does come. "If an instructor tells the students ahead of time, 'Hey, we're here to give you feedback with the goal of helping you improve,' they are setting the stage well, and feedback is more easily accepted," he explains. "The group then can agree on the best parameters for delivering that feedback, and it's easier to give feedback to someone who requests it. We do our students a great favor by asking their permission for feedback ahead of time, whether during our discussion of expectations, or during the introduction of course objectives."

Master the art of the debrief. The formal guides' meeting is a key aspect of many guiding outfits' risk management strategies. American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Andrew Councell explains how these meetings both facilitate an exchange of information on snowpack and terrain, and act as a venue for peer-to-peer feedback on performance and decision-making.

"At our lodge, the afternoon [guides'] meeting is basically a big debrief," Councell says. "The value of the feedback is massive. Canadian Mountain Holidays is very much a family atmosphere, as we lean heavily on each other's observations. We

are making critical terrain choices based on collective observations and group communication. The snowpack structure is communicated so well that if someone makes a flawed decision, it invokes a critical discussion." Feedback can be harsh, but most guides seem to appreciate the unfiltered feedback since it affects the safety of guides and their guests.

Certain key factors—experience, seniority, personality—influence the ease with which feedback is transferred. "Senior guides and/or guides who know the terrain well are usually easier to accept feedback from," Councell says. Some guides lack the clout to give good feedback in this environment, even if the rest of their guiding repertoire is at Jedi level. In essence, credibility is important: at a Canadian Heli Ski lodge, the experience, terrain knowledge, and demeanor of a mentor can make it easier for the mentee to absorb the feedback.

Discourage hazing. Cecelia Mortenson, a Canadian IFMGA Guide, has been working at a lodge near Revelstoke for several seasons and notes a past cultural phenomenon in which an unfavorable decision by one guide would invite "shaming" by others. One example: "jugging" involved the obligation to buy a round of beers for colleagues when one made an error. This practice has wound down in recent years, as any penalty incurred after making an error can make someone less likely to admit an error in the first place. Besides, providing positive feedback for good decisions has proved more effective in fostering honesty and willingness to learn from mistakes than public criticism. Constructive feedback, in other words, is far more valuable than less formal methods of pointing out others' mistakes.

Get the timing right. "One of our objectives is to give feedback when it's timely," says American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Jonathan Spitzer. "If guides have just finished a grueling and stressful 20-hour day on Rainier, for example, it wouldn't feel appropriate to give them feedback on the spot." Staff should be rested and comfortable when discussing job performance, he says.

It hasn't always been like this. "The structure of our peer-to-peer and mentorship feedback has changed dramatically in the last 10 years," Spitzer points out. "A decade ago, if a newer guide really messed something up, we struggled to give feedback in a productive manner. Now, we have a structured system in place to try to give feedback that can actually improve their performance."

Ask the right questions. "We like people to like us," says Santelices. It's true, which is at least partly why for most of us, giving praise is easy: it feels good. When we're tasked with debriefing a mediocre performance, a lot of us overemphasize the praise, and underemphasize the critical feedback. The real nitty-gritty of the art of debriefing is how to give constructive, critical feedback.

The hardest debriefs I've seen have been with individuals who appeared unaware of their deficiencies. When asked to self-assess, some folks omit any mention of their deficiencies, focusing only on what they did well.

IF PARTICIPANTS ARE COMFORTABLE, A GROUP SETTING CAN BE THE BEST WAY TO DELIVER FEEDBACK.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN SANTELICES

Some of these candidates are perfectly aware that they've had a rough performance. Some, on the other hand, are unconsciously unskilled: they lack the awareness to measure their lack of skill at a task. (Read up on the Dunning-Kruger effect for more on this phenomenon.)

"For self-aware students or candidates," offers Mortenson, "open-ended questions work well. For others, who aren't yet competent at the assessed task, you have to redesign the questioning."

To set a student up for success, especially if they're struggling with a skill, it helps to point out sub-standard performances, then immediately pivot into a more positive tone to discuss how they can improve. For example: "Your terrain assessment and track setting on the ascent of the Enormodome were below standard." (Provide photos and/or examples.) "Tell me what you can do differently tomorrow to improve your track setting and terrain assessment." We don't want to put the person in the position of defending their actions—that's already over. The debrief is more effective when it offers a silver lining: a target to focus improvement.

HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

In the last few years, my opportunities to receive feedback have been limited. I receive instructor evaluations after each AMGA program, and I often get useful feedback from my coworkers. But it's the opportunities to be a student again, like my brief clam-infested kite-surfing adventure, that give me the perspective and empathy to understand more of what my guests and students feel when they step out of their comfort zones. With the help of my colleagues, I compiled a few of the

"THE 5 Ps"

Do you wish you had a framework to enhance the quality of your debriefs? PSIA ski instructor Ross Matlock came up with a handy guide to keep in mind when framing or delivering feedback:

Partnership. Also called Personal Contact. Establish a connection with your colleague, student, mentee, or guest. Building rapport is crucial for making critique easier to give, and easier to receive. Our relationship must include the expectation that feedback will be given.

Permission. In some situations, like courses, permission to give feedback is implied (or at least set up in advance as one of the expectations). One of the lessons I've learned is to ask people if I can give them feedback now, on route, or if we should wait until later, when we can both focus on the discussion rather than the task at hand.

Private vs. Public. Would the recipient consider a debrief in the company of others, or would they rather get feedback in private? We have to be careful to not load this question. Sometimes, when asked if they'd prefer feedback in public or private, a recipient might be swayed by peer pressure into choosing a public setting, when in reality they may benefit from (and feel more comfortable with) a private discussion. In real-world work environments, like an evening guides' meeting, a public setting makes more sense to discuss information-sharing and to give feedback on operational decision-making. Still, some guide services choose a private setting to offer peer-to-peer or supervisor-to-guide feedback.

Preference. This describes the style of delivery, and can make it much easier to be receptive to feedback in high-stress situations. Many people prefer the "give it to me straight" approach. They want honest, direct feedback. Others may need at least some praise sprinkled throughout critical feedback. The "shit sandwich" style works well for some, but not all. In times of struggle, I've found that I need a different style of feedback every day. (After several consecutive days stuck as a kite-surfing novice last fall, for example, I really wanted my instructor to up the proportion of praise and encouragement to boost my well-being. It helped me empathize with students I see going through the Mountain Guide track process.)

Paraphrase. After a verbal feedback session, we need to check for understanding. This sets us up well for an eventual written evaluation, should that be appropriate. Former ACMG Technical Director Colin Zacharias suggests closing verbal debriefs with a summary of the three most important points, which he asks his students to paraphrase back to him. This can help people remember for years what to work on, or reflect on how far they've progressed.

most frequently mentioned ways to put yourself in the best position to receive feedback.

Assume good intentions. "Whenever you're receiving feedback, first assume good intentions," says Mortenson. "We often don't do this because we feel attacked, while the opposite is usually true."

Jeff Banks, a Colorado- and Chamonix-based American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, echoes this advice, adding, "Our egos are inherently tied up with our self-worth as guides. When a person gets critical feedback, he or she sometimes thinks, 'This affects how I value myself.'" Ultimately, we have to differentiate between critique of our performances and critique of our personalities.

Optimize your environment. If you're cold, wearing wet clothes, and haven't eaten in six hours, you're not in the best position to process advice. Change your environment and comfort level, and feel free to let your instructor, mentor, or colleague know that you'll be better prepared to have a productive conversation after you've done so.

SMALL-GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK IS OFTEN THE APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUE.

PHOTO BY ZACH LOVELL (AMGA ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT ALPINE GUIDE, APPRENTICE SKI GUIDE)

Take notes. If you don't write it down, it didn't happen. Former ACMG Technical Director Colin Zacharias suggests writing down the three most important pieces of feedback you received, at minimum. This can be a valuable check for understanding, and when you revisit that little yellow notebook five or 10 years from now while planning an expedition to Rumdoodle, your transcription of that debrief may rekindle key

DEBRIEFS ARE A CRUCIAL PART OF ROCK-GUIDE COURSES.

PHOTO BY HOLLY BARRASS (AMGA APPRENTICE ROCK GUIDE, SPI)

memories of things to still work on—or maybe your notes will simply be a testament to how far you've come.

View feedback as an opportunity to improve. Mortenson recalls that one of her mantras during exams was, "If I have a weakness, please let it come out on this exam, so that the examiner catches it, helps me correct it, and so that it doesn't happen with a real client."

Treat the exam as a shakedown and a learning experience before the rest of your career begins, not an end-all-be-all assessment of your abilities. When you look at it this way, it's easier to ask for feedback.

Identify your blind spots. Banks went through almost the entire AMGA program as a student before beginning his guiding career. Since he lacked the on-the-job feedback so common to many up-and-coming American guides, Banks leaned heavily on the contents of his debriefs and notes to mold his performance. Banks also points out that in retrospect, he's very happy to have avoided "experimenting with real clients" until he had been peer-reviewed and had attained his aspirant level of qualification. Banks has woven this less common approach into his teaching style on AMGA programs, often stating that having clients' lives in your hands is not a position to take lightly, especially when recognizing that the students are at the beginning of a long, hard learning progression. Banks points out that, regardless of the length of a guide's career, having peer review is invaluable. "The definition of a blind spot is that you can't see it yourself. You need someone else to point it out to you," Banks says.

Feedback is challenging on both sides of the coin. The gurus in our guiding world are capable of giving good feedback, but they are equally strategic with setting expectations and creating an environment favorable for receiving feedback. As for the rest of us? Like any other guiding skill, developing a good head for feedback takes constant practice and awareness, but it's a skill that will make mastering all the others much easier. «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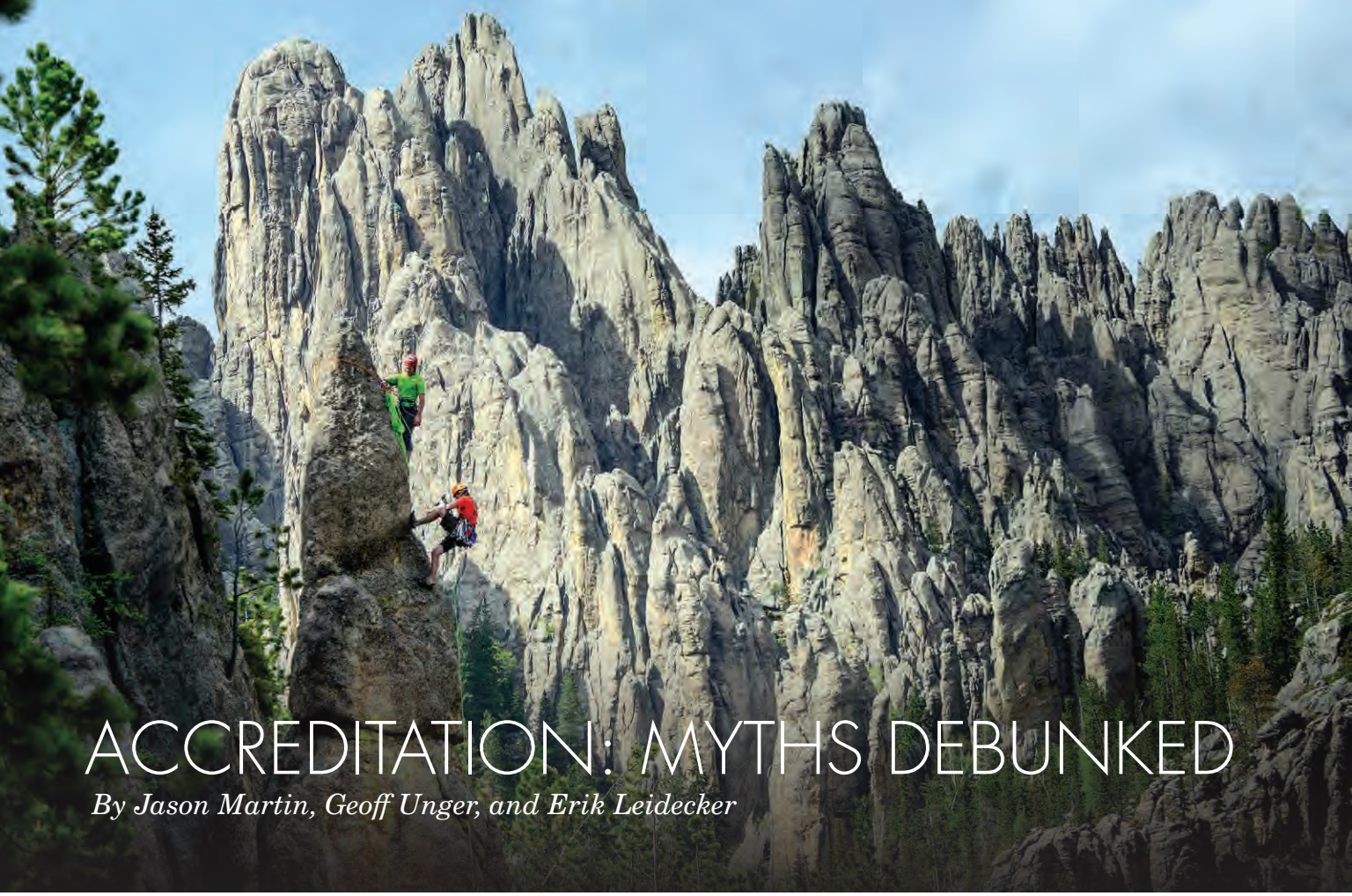


ACCREDITATION: MYTHS DEBUNKED

By Jason Martin, Geoff Unger, and Erik Leidecker

COMPARED TO OTHER INDUSTRIES, THE FIELDS of mountain education and guiding have just stepped out of their infancy in the United States. We have developed a robust system of professional education for those who wish to work in the mountains. And we have developed a review process for the businesses that employ mountain professionals. But—with a few marked exceptions—AMGA training, certification, and accreditation remain voluntary.

There is a tremendous amount of conversation among young guides about the value of AMGA training and certification. Most believe it to be a mark of professionalism, and most choose to take part in AMGA programming. On the other hand, there are limited conversations about the value of accreditation, even though it, too, is a mark of professionalism. This lack of conversation also leads to a lack of knowledge about the process, and the result is that most climbing schools and guide services in the United States are not accredited. —*JM*

MYTH: The accreditation process is too time-consuming.

To start the accreditation process for my company, I contacted AMGA Accreditation Director Ed Crothers and began to assemble the materials and documents for the review. These included our website and other marketing materials, operating plans, guide rosters, and contact info for our permit administrators.

The initial review process also included a self-assessment, which is always a good first step in assessing practices in risk management programs. We identified and addressed many shortcomings in our business during this process alone.

From start to finish, the accreditation process took me about a year. However, our review was put on hold for at least six months during the time Ed was the interim executive director and the future of Scope of Practice (then known as Terrain and Supervision Guidelines) was in question. From the time Ed began our review in earnest, it only took about a month to receive his initial report, which outlined required actions to achieve accreditation. These actions were divided into three categories (required changes, suggested changes, and considerations), which were then relatively straightforward to analyze and implement. —*EL*

MYTH: Accreditation undermines the value of certification.

There are many misunderstandings about the purposes of training and certification and the purpose of accreditation. Training and certification are for instructors and guides. Accreditation is for businesses that employ instructors and guides. Training and certification provide people with

[OPPOSING PAGE] CHEYENNE CHAFFEE (AMGA ROCK GUIDE, APPRENTICE ALPINE GUIDE) AND DARYL STISSER (AMGA SPI) OF SYLVAN ROCKS CLIMBING SCHOOL AND GUIDE SERVICE CLIMBING IN CUSTER STATE PARK.

PHOTO BY SOUTH DAKOTA TOURISM

the skills to work in the mountains. Accreditation provides businesses with critical feedback on what they can do better.

Historically, AMGA training and certification were separate from the accreditation standard. Accredited businesses were required to provide internal training with certified guides. This will change as the newly adopted Scope of Practice document begins to define the terrain where guides are able to work. —*JM*

As stakeholders in the AMGA, accredited businesses gain the support of a national organization that can support the profession of guiding to benefit not only the individual guide, but also the businesses by contributing to the sustainability of the profession and the reputation and influence of the industry. By implementing Scope of Practice for both AMGA professional members and accredited businesses, the AMGA forged a link between a strong training program and best practices in operation of guide businesses.

The Scope of Practice and the Code of Ethics and Conduct are platforms where the AMGA can continue to grow and strengthen the guide community, including the Accreditation Program. Though Scope of Practice does not come into effect until 2022, its link to accreditation is one of the biggest reasons to become accredited—for both individual certified guides and small businesses. Now that the two are tied together, the accreditation program supports training and certification for guides. —*GU*

MYTH: **Accreditation is unnecessary; it's just another box to check without any real, lasting benefits.**

It is not uncommon for instructors and guides to come into an AMGA course with a belief that they are highly skilled and have little more to learn. Many are surprised by how valuable the courses are to them. The same is certainly true with the accreditation process: many businesses believe that there is limited value to the AMGA accreditation review. But when they go through the process, they often find a number of ways to improve.

I have been through the entire accreditation process three times with the company I manage. I learned something new about risk management, liability, and the mountain guiding industry each time. When you're in the thick of it running a company, it's easy to overlook things. Indeed, at least one liability issue noted by the reviewer on my second review clearly put us at risk in the event of a lawsuit. If we hadn't gone through an accreditation review, it's likely we would still have that problem within our company. —*JM*

The AMGA Accreditation process has been an important

It was incredibly valuable for me to go through the questionnaire and create a documented foundation for risk management for my operation.

step for my own personal business, but also for the Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC). As an individual who's trained and certified through the AMGA, I understood all the things I needed to do to manage risk in the field. However, the documentation, insurance, and other risk management pieces were not readily apparent from the training. Some of the requirements were fairly straightforward and easy to learn from initial applications with land managers, but some of the subtlety and nuance was missing. The process of being reviewed externally strengthened both businesses (CGC and Geoff Unger Mountain Guide). The CGC in particular benefited from a look at its policies and procedures with regard to employee policies and non-guide-related items. My personal business, on the other hand, didn't really have any procedures in place, and it was incredibly valuable for me to go through the questionnaire and create a documented foundation for risk management for my operation. —*GU*

Beyond the review, the accreditation process also provided us with resources such as websites, sample policies, and research articles to help make changes to those deficient areas of our operations.

Additionally, as the only accredited business in our local region, we feel accreditation gives us a competitive edge. Our overall web traffic and bookings have outpaced our normal growth rate since we became accredited. This is

NEW GUIDES TRAINING AT AMERICAN ALPINE INSTITUTE IN RED ROCK CANYON, NEVADA.

PHOTO BY JASON MARTIN (AMGA ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT ALPINE GUIDE)

JASON MARTIN — BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

Jason is an AMGA Rock Guide and Assistant Alpine Guide. He manages the American Alpine Institute in Bellingham, serves on the AMGA Board of Directors, and is on the AMGA Ad Hoc Committee on Accreditation.

GEOFF UNGER — MAMMOTH, CALIFORNIA

Geoff is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide and AMGA Instructor Team Member. In addition to his work as a guide and instructor, Geoff is also the Operations Manager for the Certified Guides Cooperative, a company dedicated to holding permits and insurance for AMGA Certified Guides. During his time off, Geoff tries to climb as much alpine rock as possible.

ERIK LEIDECKER — HAILEY, IDAHO

Erik grew up in Ketchum, Idaho, and started working for Sawtooth Mountain Guides (SMG) in 1993 while attending Dartmouth College, where he was an English/writing major and a member of the varsity alpine ski team. Today he jointly runs SMG with Chris and Sara Lundy. Erik is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, an AMGA Instructor Team Member, and a member of the Eddie Bauer/First Ascent Ski Guide Team. Erik lives with his wife, Gretchen, and their daughters, Sascha and Svea.

despite recent significant rate increases to offset a big bump in guide wages and other expenses. Although it's hard to ascribe direct correlation, we aren't aware of variables aside from accreditation that might account for the recent growth. And of course our guides pursuing training and certification aren't complaining about the 10 percent discount on programs.

Also with accreditation came a new mindset for our business that had always existed for our individual certified guides. Our business became a part of a larger community and made us feel a part of something bigger. —*EL*

MYTH: Accreditation isn't rigorous enough to be worth the cost.

At the moment, accreditation provides a business with four valuable elements.

There's a business review, a process wherein a qualified individual looks at all the elements of given business. This includes, but is not limited to, the way employees are trained and treated, the way the company manages land use permits, the company's risk management strategies, and the way the company markets itself.

Accreditation also provides marketing power. The AMGA accredited business logo is slowly becoming more valuable to the public. The ability for a business to use this may give it a leg up on its competitors.

Guides who work at accredited businesses get a 10 percent course discount on AMGA courses. This discount saves guides many thousands of dollars over the course of their careers.

Accreditation can also be a huge boost to land availability and access. There are currently a handful of public lands that require a guide service to hold AMGA accreditation or an equivalency. It is likely that in the coming years more land managers will see the value of this credential and will require something similar. —*JM*

For us, the review was rigorous enough to highlight weaknesses in our business—from holes in our medical screening process to inconsistencies in our marketing materials to problems with employee classification. We also discovered our system of logging and retiring equipment

DARYL STISSER (AMGA SPI) PUTS UP THE ROPE IN CUSTER STATE PARK, SOUTH DAKOTA.

PHOTO BY SOUTH DAKOTA TOURISM

was inadequate, as were the resources we provided for guides in the event of a serious incident or fatality.

Although we may have discovered and addressed some of these issues over time, it was invaluable to have a single, comprehensive evaluation. The review process also affirmed that many aspects of our operation were healthy, functional, and consistent with practices observed by the accreditation director across the guiding industry.

Overall, SMG found the process to be well worth the money spent. No guiding program can exist in a vacuum—outside monitoring is a foundational concept of robust risk management, and we found this third-party audit to be extremely beneficial. The auditing team provided perspective and expertise much larger than that of our small company. The review provided insight and advice for insurance and legal issues to which small business owners might not otherwise have access. —*EL*

MYTH: **The money used to pay the Accreditation Director should be used to gain greater access for certified guides.**

The AMGA Board of Directors has created an Ad Hoc committee to develop new ways to make accreditation more valuable. The committee is exploring a number of potential benefits that may help guide services and climbing schools reduce costs and improve their products. It's too early to announce any of these as they are still being researched, but as the benefits are confirmed, the AMGA will notify members.

Some make the argument that the money used for accreditation should instead be used to increase access for certified guides. The AMGA Board of Directors would like to see more access for guides, but not at the expense of accreditation. Increased access is a separate strategic goal. —*JM*

MYTH: **Accreditation fractures the guiding industry into accredited and non-accredited businesses, which is ultimately bad for the industry.**

One of the biggest issues facing our industry today is access to public lands and existing relationships with land managers. With SOP tying together training/certification and accreditation, we now have an opportunity to address these common issues and concerns from a unified platform.

To all the guide businesses out there that have been waiting to see what happens with a link between certification and accreditation via SOP, I would recommend you get involved in the AMGA Accreditation Program and see what it has to offer your business. There is a lot of value to the review process alone, and the benefits will continue to grow the more we work together to make our industry stronger, both internally in the AMGA and externally with the public and land managers. —*GU* «

TREATING ELBOW OVERUSE INJURIES

Is anything tantamount 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

A FEW YEARS AGO, I SPENT SOME TIME IN Western Colorado during a record snow year. I shoveled constantly—repetitive use and abuse just to clear the driveway and roof. As this process unfolded, so did the pain in my elbow. Over the course of the next few years, the pain increased and limited my climbing.

I thought it would resolve with rest and stretching. But Indian Creek was brutal, sport climbing intense. What to do?

When we work in the mountains, our elbows work overtime—so overuse injuries are common. Belaying and rope management require constant attention, not to mention the actual climbing. Once the injury pattern starts, finding a resolution can be onerous.

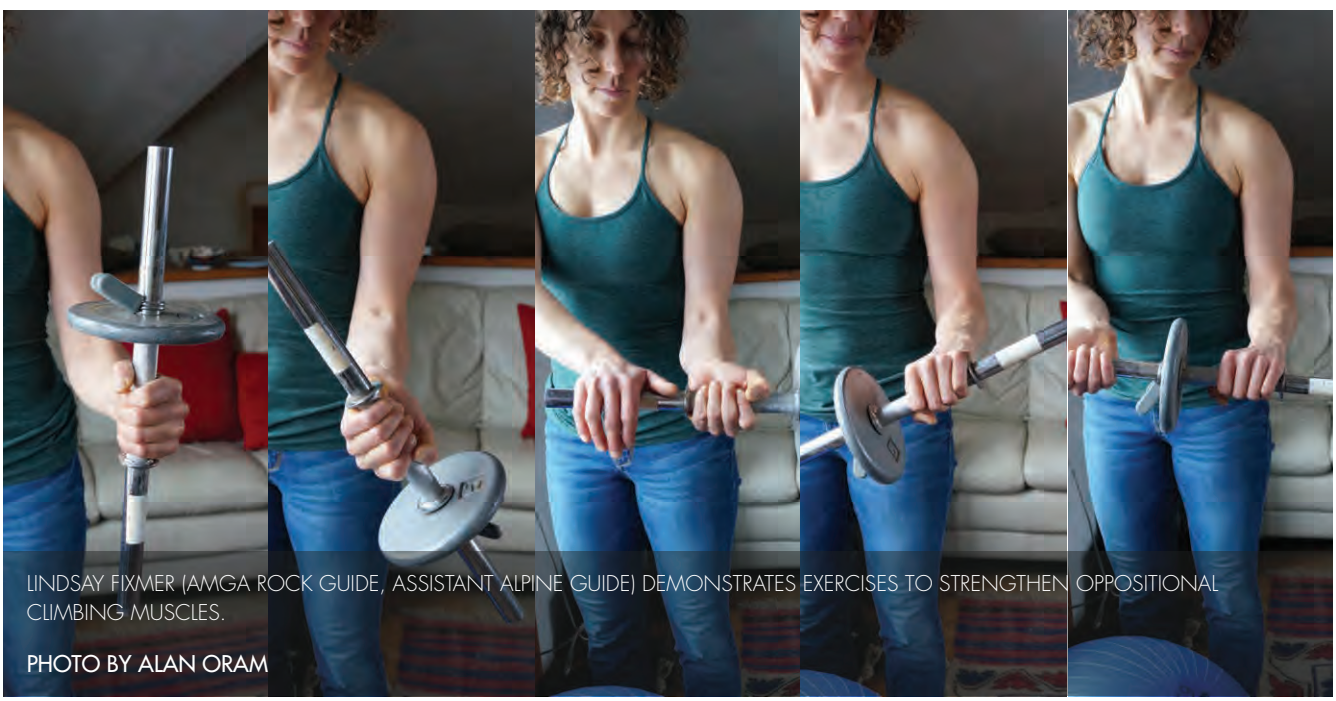
THE INJURY PATTERN

There are two phases of injury: acute and chronic.

Acute tendonitis is the first phase. It occurs when high forces act on a muscle or tendon. For example, you pull hard on a crimp and—boom—you feel sudden pain somewhere in the chain of muscles in your elbow. This may present with pain in the forearm or elbow, where the flexor muscles insert into the elbow.

Treatment recommendations:

1. Let your injury heal. If it hurts when you climb, you are not ready to send. Take this time to focus on learning to train and climb more efficiently. Climb easier routes with open hands. Try to minimize the forces on your elbow when belaying and handling ropes: use different rope configurations, devices that have less rope resistance, or different hand positions.
2. Ice it. Icing has merit for short periods of time. For the first 48 hours, apply ice to the affected area four times daily for 10 to 15 minutes (longer and you risk cold injury). Freeze water in a paper cup, then use it to focus placement on the elbow.



LINDSAY FIXMER (AMGA ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT ALPINE GUIDE) DEMONSTRATES EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN OPPOSITIONAL CLIMBING MUSCLES.

PHOTO BY ALAN ORAM

3. Use anti-inflammatories. If you decide to use anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, make sure they won't interact with any other medications you're taking. Limit use to short periods.

Oral steroids and localized injections sound appealing, but they may actually impair the healing process by causing tendon rupture and potentially masking the actual problem.

After four to six weeks, the injury is chronic (tendonosis). Micro-tears in the tendon and muscle interface cause the pain associated with "climber's elbow." You may not experience pain while you climb, but afterwards it can be intolerable.

Treatment recommendations:

1. Stop climbing. It's hard but essential: you can't climb through this injury. Don't risk permanent injury stopping you in your tracks.
2. Deep tissue massage. This can break up scar tissue and allow tissue to begin the healing and remodeling process. Alternately, an "Armaid" is a commercial product that assists with localized massage of the forearm muscles.
3. Acupuncture. Research is limited, but alternative medicine can play a role in the healing process.
4. Stretching. Use a cast-iron pan as a counterforce to stretch the tissues in your arm. Grasp in a vertical position and slowly lower to the outside until you feel the stretch in your elbow. Then, with your other hand, lift it to vertical and repeat. Do three sets of 10 reps, and then repeat, lowering the pan to the inside.
5. Surgical care. The last resort. If all fails despite focused and purposeful therapy, seek evaluation by a qualified orthopedist.

As your recovery continues, you will need to address the general weakness in the antagonist muscles in the forearm: the extensors. (See Resources section below.)

I battled climber's elbow for years and am now pain-free. The tools I used work—as long as you're proactive and diligent. Here are some general ideas for successful methods of treatment and maintenance.

- Once recovered from the injury, maintain a balance in your upper extremities of strength and mobility. Address weakness in your extensor muscle group by working the muscles you don't normally train.
- Stretch everything, not just your forearms. Our bodies are interconnected.
- If you are hurting, step back and address the problem.

I can't overstate the importance of balance, adaptation, and acceptance of what you have and how you can live with injury and work through it. Passions sometimes outweigh reality, and learning to adapt to the changing nature of your body's response to elbow problems will assure you a long career on the rock and in the mountains.

RESOURCES

Ester Smith, Founder of Grassroots Physical Therapy
grassrootsselftreatment.com
Eric Horst, Author of *Training for Climbing*
Forearm Antagonist Training for Climbers
trainingforclimbing.com/effective-forearm-antagonist-training-for-climbers «

Have a question you'd like Alan to answer in the GUIDE Bulletin*? Send it to info@amga.com.*

ALAN ORAM — WILSON, WYOMING

Alan has been climbing since before camming devices hit the market. He took a break for medical school and residency. Now, he practices emergency medicine, works as an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, and serves as medical advisor to the AMGA and many private guiding companies.

NUTRITION: THE GUIDE'S GUIDE

By Matthew Larsen

PHOTO BY BRIAN THRELKELD / THRELKELD OUTDOOR

Guides put countless hours into planning and preparing to reduce risk in the mountains, but that's rendered moot without proper fueling. Diet plays a critical role in physiological and psychological performance. Balanced, nutrient-dense energy intake and hydration impact mood, focus, and efficiency.

MOUNTAIN TRAVEL IMPACTS METABOLISM IN ways we don't always expect or plan for. It's not uncommon for a guide to burn as many as 6,000 calories a day in the mountains. Higher-elevation exercise requires more energy intake than activities at sea level, despite lessened appetite. Exertion in cold environments, thanks to shivering, can increase metabolic rate up to five times at rest.

First, let's break down the basics of nutrition. Our main energy sources are carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. How much of each we need varies between individuals and levels of exertion. To figure out what to plan for, you'll need to calculate your daily total energy expenditure (TEE), which is made up of your basal metabolic rate (BMR), thermal effect of food, and activity factor.

DETERMINE BASAL METABOLIC RATE

The Basal Metabolic Rate is the number of calories the body needs when it's at complete rest. Calculate your daily energy needs using height, weight, and age with the Harris-Benedict equation, which was developed from a study first published in 1919. There are numerous formulas for estimating BMR, but this is the most accurate for athletes. (If you know your lean body mass, use the Cunningham equation instead.) Here's the formula—use Imperial measurements.

Women: BMR = 655 + (4.35 x weight in pounds) + (4.7 x height in inches) - (4.7 x age in years)
Men: BMR = 66 + (6.23 x weight in pounds) + (12.7 x height in inches) - (6.8 x age in years)

Next, you'll multiply this value by an activity factor, depending on typical levels of exercise and daily activity, to obtain a realistic picture of daily energy expenditure.

FIND THE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITY FACTOR

Multiply your BMR by the appropriate activity factor, as follows:

	Activity Factor
Sedentary (little or no exercise)	1.2
Lightly active (light exercise/sports 1–3 days/week)	1.375
Moderately active (moderate exercise/sports 3–5 days/week	1.55
Very active (hard exercise/sports 6–7 days/week	1.725
Extra active (very hard exercise/ sports & physical job, twice-daily workouts)	1.9

For example: A 38-year-old male guide who weighs 180 pounds and stands 6'5" (or 77") would have a daily total energy expenditure of roughly 3,623 calories per day.

BMR = 66 + (6.23 x 180#) + (12.7 x 77") - (6.8 x 38)
BMR = 66 + (1,121.4) + (977.9) - (258.4) = 1,906.9 Calories per day at rest.
TEE = 1,906.9 x 1.9 = 3,623.11

Adjusting your intake based on elevation and temperatures is difficult without access to a training facility and lab, so making those adjustments will likely require some personal

trial and error. Using your BMR as a baseline and logging what you eat during various activities is the best way to determine how many calories and what kinds of food and hydration optimize your performance.

DETERMINE WHAT TO EAT

The macronutrient percentages you'll need are based on total daily calorie needs.

Fats should make up 20–35 percent of your calories. They're higher in calories per gram, more difficult to digest, take more oxygen to digest, and may cause stomach problems with hard workouts. Avoid large amounts right before a strenuous workout, but add them to long-duration activities as a good source of fuel. Examples: nuts, seeds, olives, avocados, coconut oil.

Carbohydrates should be 45–65 percent of your calorie intake. They're easier to consume at elevation, and the body uses them more readily. Aim for whole grains and complex carbohydrates for longer-term, sustained energy. Utilize simple sugars (gels, shot blocks, sports beans) for "fast action" energy. Examples: fruit, dried fruit, whole grains, starchy vegetables (corn, potato), legumes, granola bars, quinoa.

Proteins should be around 15–20 percent of caloric intake. If you find that it's difficult to meet your daily protein quota, using protein shakes or supplements is a helpful method for attaining this daily requirement. Regardless of dietary preferences, athletes have higher protein needs than the general public. Examples: poultry, meat, fish, eggs, dairy, seeds, nuts, legumes.

Note: There is a lot of interest in metabolic efficiency and the possibility of the body's ability to utilize macronutrients in a higher fat-to-carbohydrate ratio. This is a dietary shift that requires time and adaptation to modify an individual's metabolism successfully. If this is a diet change you are interested in exploring, you should work with a professional.

THREE STAGES OF (GUIDE) SPORTS NUTRITION

Pre-Fueling

When: 1–2 days ahead of time

What: Meals on the day(s) before and on the morning of should include some carbohydrates with proteins (nut butter, yogurt, meat, soy) to help stabilize blood sugars.

Why: The idea here is to start on a full tank. Start hydrated. If the guiding agenda is for multi-day activity, start pre-fueling a couple days prior.

Activity Fueling

When: Hydration is the biggest key in keeping your body up to speed. Eat something small every 60 to 90 minutes and consume fluids every 30 minutes. Acute dehydration has been shown to affect short-term memory and attention, and can lead to confusion and disorientation.

What: Fueling during mountain days comes down to individual preferences and knowledge of what works well. Find foods that are appetizing and easy to prepare and eat. Think of food that sounds appealing even when your appetite diminishes due to exertion or altitude—this is not the optimal time to try new foods. Familiar foods are also likely to agree with your digestive tract.

AYURVEDA FOR GUIDES

Ayurveda offers an alternative to traditional nutritional wisdom

By Winslow Passey

Ayurveda is a 5,000-year-old blend of science and medicine, syncing humans with nature's rhythms for maximum wellness, vitality, and energy. Aligning with your circadian clock offers advantages for both mind and body.

Chia Seed Porridge

Load up with fiber, omega 3s, vitamins, and minerals.

1. Soak 2 tbsp chia/hemp seeds in water for at least four hours (preferably overnight).
2. Add ½ c hemp seeds.
3. Add 1 tbsp each of ghee, coconut oil, cinnamon; salt to taste.
4. Heat to desired eating temperature.
5. When hot, add sprouted nuts and seeds.
6. Add stevia or dates to sweeten, or try it savory with black pepper.

Living Soup

Raw veggies and fruits contain the enzymes your body needs to break down food. When we heat them past 118°F, the enzymes die. With this recipe, it takes just 10 minutes to make two or three meals.

1. In a blender, combine 2 c bone broth and 1 c coconut milk.
2. Add veggies (1 c each, depending how many you use), like Brussels sprouts, celery, green beans, peppers, beet, broccoli, and carrots.
3. Add herbs—½ bunch each of cilantro, basil, and parsley.
4. Add spices to taste (try 1 tsp each at first): curry, turmeric, coriander, cumin, and pepper.
5. And a thumb-sized piece each of ginger and turmeric root, washed but not peeled.
6. Blend, warm, and top with avocado, fermented veggies, and sprouted nuts and seeds.

Bacon, Eggs, and Greens

1. Cook 2 eggs over easy in 1 tsp ghee and 1 tsp coconut oil.
2. OR scramble 2 eggs with 2 tbsp soaked chia seeds.
3. Sauté 2–3 pieces of bacon (no hormones or antibiotics).
4. Sauté ½ large container of greens with 1 tbsp ghee and 1 tbsp coconut oil.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. Top with 2 tbsp sauerkraut and ½ c yogurt with 1 tbsp soaked chia seeds for probiotics.

Hydration needs vary between individuals. Recommendations range from half a liter an hour to 1.5 or two liters per activity to two or three liters per day. Your body may also need electrolytes based on the day's projected intensity, duration, and environment. In this case, add a carbohydrate and electrolyte mix to fluids, or bring electrolyte-rich foods. Try dried fruit, nuts and seeds, jerky, dark chocolate, fig bars, cookies, granola, Clif Bars, dehydrated meals, nut butters, gels, blocks, hot soup, wild rice, whole grains, starchy vegetable, legumes, or steel-cut oats.

Why: A carbohydrate snack every hour or so can help stave off "bonking," or depletion of energy sources.

Recovery Fueling

When: Best if within one hour of activity, as fueling within this window allows for efficiently reabsorbing nutrients and initating the repair process, thus impacting future performance and mountain objectives.

What: Carbohydrates and fluids should be the focus, with proteins coming in a close third. As soon as possible, consume half a liter to a liter of fluids. Rehydrating after each activity allows your body to recover faster—or handle the next day's exertion. Electrolyte mixes are good, but if you are rehydrating with food, you'll get electrolytes there.

Why: During prolonged activity, muscle breakdown and glycogen (stored sugar) depletion occurs. Consuming the right foods post-activity is incredibly important.

Linking all three of the above fueling steps is important for health and injury prevention for mountain guides and for your clients. Plan all of your trips to include menus that allow you to eat real food and stay hydrated. Eat what you know, and plan your menus around these foods and drinks—whether you are training or on a trip. Most importantly, remember that maximizing energy input means maximizing energy output. «

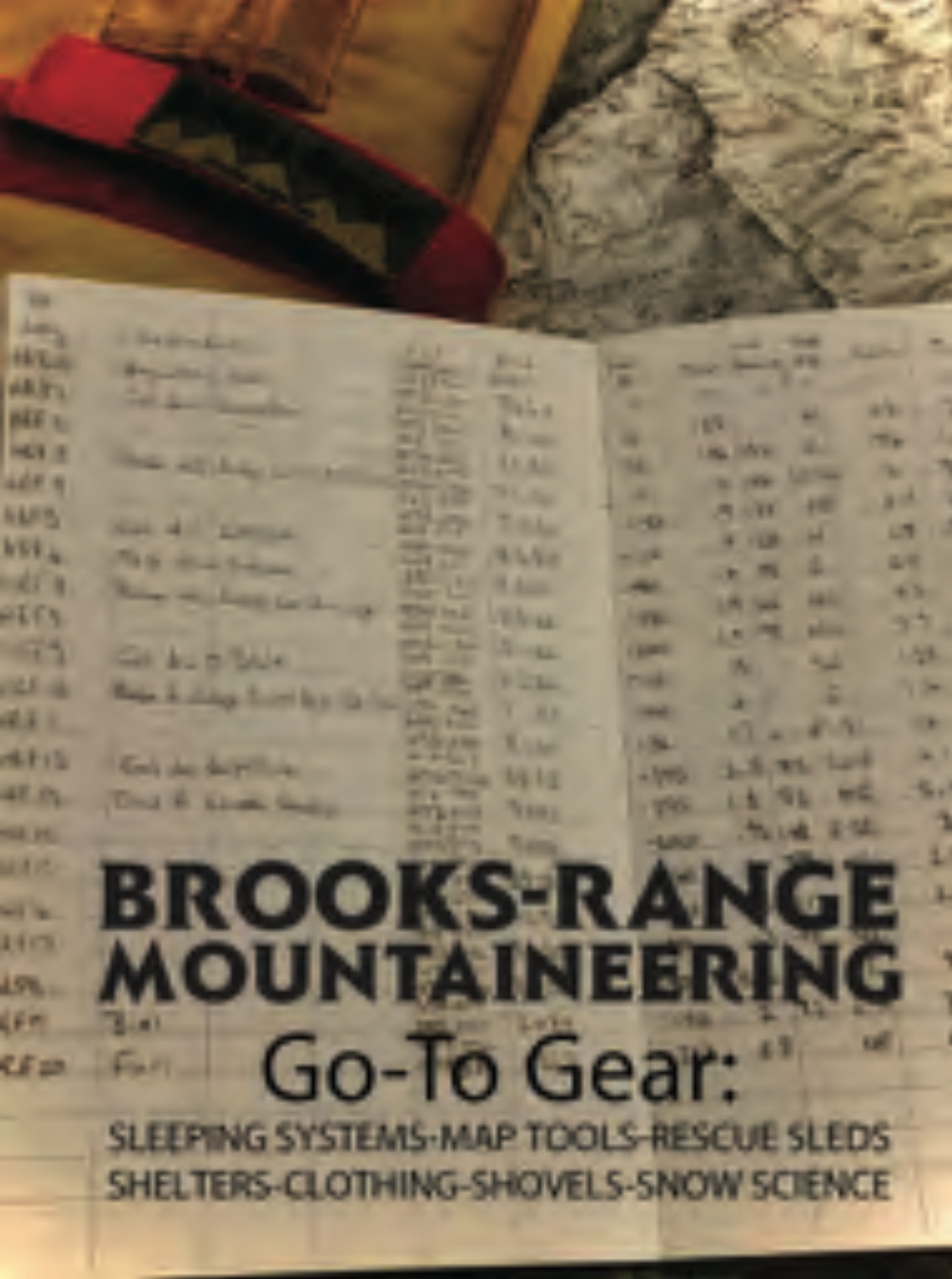

BROOKS-RANGE
MOUNTAINEERING
Go-To Gear:
SLEEPING SYSTEMS-MAP TOOLS-RESCUE SLEDS
SHELTERS-CLOTHING-SHOVELS-SNOW SCIENCE

PHOTO BY ARLIN LADUE

CALEB *LADUE*

By Chase Nelson

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT I WRITE TO pass on the news of the death of a dear friend and fellow guide, Caleb Ladue. On October 22, 2017, Caleb was skiing on a glacier in the Chilean Andes outside Santiago when he fell into a crevasse. Despite a skilled rescue effort, he did not survive his injuries.

This mission on Cerro Cortaderas marked the beginning of a two-month climbing trip with his best friend, Randall Stacy. They planned to climb their way through Chile and Argentina to their ultimate destination: exploring unclimbed ice outside El Chaltén.

Caleb started working at RMI Expeditions in 2014. He had since expanded his range, working at Sawtooth Mountain Guides and San Juan Mountain Guides, and was making steady progress toward his American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide certification. He had taken coursework and guided in all three disciplines, and was well on his way to accomplishing his goal.

Anyone who has tied in with or guided alongside Caleb would agree that he was someone special. His raw talent was outshined only by his intelligence and genuine kindness to those around him. His love for the mountains was palpable, and it showed in his work, his friendships, and in his family. This loss will leave an immense void in our tight-knit community of climbers, skiers, and guides. His presence will be greatly missed. He leaves behind his parents, Winslow and Mary Anne; his brother, Arlin; and his partner, Audrey. «

PLANNING YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE CAN BE SIMPLE: MOUNTAIN MADNESS OFFERS ITS EMPLOYEES A PATH TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

If you've entered a career as a mountain guide, you're not likely to retire early. Many of us are here because we believe the lifestyle trumps financial security—but the two aren't necessarily mutually exclusive.

Mark Gunlogson, president and owner of Mountain Madness, has been in the industry since 1987. "When many of us old-school guides look back at the good old days when we were in our 20s and 30s, when life had fewer responsibilities," he explains, "we might proudly tell you it didn't matter that our bank accounts frequently hovered around $100. Now, though, many of us will also tell you we wish we had had some guidance about saving along the way." Fortunately, Gunlogson says, there are a lot of tools available to help guides secure a solid financial future.

As a way to help put Mountain Madness employees on the path to financial security, Mountain Madness gives its guides the opportunity to open a SIMPLE IRA. The offer is open to guides who a) have been with the company for at least one year and b) earn at least $5,000 annually.

This retirement savings plan is simple, but it gets its name from an acronym: **S**avings **I**ncentive **M**atch **PL**an for **E**mployees. It's suited for small employers—which most guiding businesses are—who otherwise couldn't afford to sponsor a retirement plan for its employees.

Companies that offer a SIMPLE IRA must offer to match at least 3 percent of employees' contributions to their retirement savings. It doesn't sound like much, but say you earn a $600 monthly paycheck. Investing $18 (that's 3 percent) can do a lot in the long-term, and you'll hardly notice it's missing from your check. Plus, your employer contributes another $18—it's free money.

If the guide service you work for doesn't offer a SIMPLE IRA plan, consider self-funding a ROTH IRA with an automatic withdrawal from your bank.

Look at it this way. If you open an account with $100 and put $18 per month away starting at age 25, and let it ride for 40 years at 7 percent annual growth, you would have about $49,000 available at age 65. Of course, markets and interest rates go up and down, but you'll be doing yourself a favor if you start consistently putting away for retirement now—and simply forgetting it's there until you need it.

—Mark Gunlogson, President / Owner, Mountain Madness

IFMGA ELECTS ITS FIRST NON-EUROPEAN BOARD MEMBER

In a groundbreaking move, the IFMGA elected its first board member from a non-European country in late 2017. It's not the first unprecedented achievement for Juliana García of Ecuador, who became the first female fully certified IFMGA guide in Latin America in April of last year. García is a founding member of the IFGMA's Environmental Commission; she has also served as the president of the Ecuadorian Mountain Guides Association since 2015, and continues to guide for Mountain Madness. She has been climbing in Ecuador since the age of 15, has first ascents to her name in Bolivia and in the Peruvian Andes, and was a member of a Gasherbrum II expedition in 2015.

GUIDE TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL, BUT IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO GIVE GUIDES THE KEYS TO A SOLID FINANCIAL FUTURE.

PHOTO BY COREY TATMAN (AMGA SPI) / EDGEWORKS CLIMBING

ACCESS SECURED AT OURAY ICE PARK

A new management agreement has been adopted by the City of Ouray and Ouray Ice Park, Inc. that secures 25% of Ouray Ice Park visitor capacity for commercial and institutional group use. During the planning process, the guiding community attended over 20 meetings with stakeholder groups to discuss management strategies, advocate for guiding interests, and seek common ground. As a result of this collaborative effort, guiding opportunities have been preserved—and potentially expanded—while also addressing crowding issues and other land management concerns. The new commercial use guidelines will take effect in the 2019–2020 season.

ACCESS OPENED AT GATE BUTTRESS, UTAH

We are pleased to announce a new access opportunity at the Gate Buttress in Little Cottonwood Canyon, Utah. After extended negotiations with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS Church), an agreement has been signed to allow guided rock climbing on 140 acres of private LDS Church property around the Gate Buttress. This includes over 588 routes in popular areas such as Green Adjective, School Room, and The Fin. The effort to open this area was led by the hard-working team at Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (SLCA) and was supported by the AMGA's Advocacy department. To apply for a permit to guide at the Gate Buttress, please contact Julia Geisler, SLCA Executive Director, at julia@saltlakeclimber.org. «

AMGA ESTABLISHES MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The AMGA has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Park Service (NPS). This agreement strengthens the guiding community's relationship with NPS and creates new avenues for collaboration on land use management, stewardship, and planning.

According to the MOU, the NPS "agrees to work with the AMGA to identify appropriate places for the public to experience climbing and backcountry skiing activities with a guide... [and] coordinate with the AMGA to identify mutually beneficial projects and activities." The document also directs NPS to make the objectives of the agreement available to park staff in order to support improved planning and management of guided climbing and skiing opportunities within the National Park System.

Among other obligations, the MOU requires the AMGA to "encourage responsible practices and stewardship among the mountain guiding community and participate with NPS in developing and disseminating information that fosters safe climbing, mountaineering, and backcountry skiing practices; promote stewardship and conservation; and encourage responsible use and outdoor ethics."

"This agreement is a big deal for the AMGA, its members, and accredited businesses," says Advocacy and Policy Director Matt Wade. "It increases awareness of our activities within NPS and it positions us as a primary resource for the agency on matters related to guided climbing and skiing. This substantially increases our opportunity to communicate with park officials and demonstrate that we are willing and capable partners."

AMGA members and accredited businesses can use the MOU to initiate relationships with local NPS land managers. To access the MOU for this purpose, or to learn more, please contact Matt Wade at matt@amga.com or 303-847-4482.

NUMBERS DON'T LIE: TRIP INSURANCE IS A MUST FOR MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAMS

If you've ever taken a Mountain Guide Program, you've probably received a logistics packet peppered with "The AMGA strongly recommends purchasing travel insurance." Allow us to reiterate: The AMGA strongly recommends purchasing travel insurance for all Mountain Guide Programs.

Since the beginning of 2015, a total of 26 students have lost their tuition because they had to cancel at the last minute. Lost tuition during that time totaled more than $50,000—and every program, from the Rock Guide Course to the Ski Guide Exam, was affected. That number doesn't include lost travel and lodging costs, which would put us closer to the $75,000+ mark. Margins are so razor-thin on

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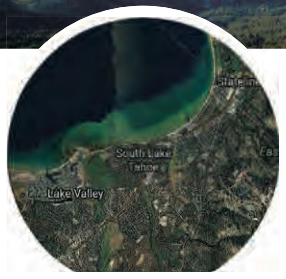

GPS + FULL COLOR MAP WITH OFFLINE USE SUPPORT

Compatibility with various satellite positioning systems enables users to display their current location on a full-color map. Map data can also be downloaded to permit display of the map even with your smartphone offline.

ORIGINAL APPLICATIONS

Apps have been developed to support users in various outdoor activities.

LOCATION MEMORY

Your precise current location is displayed on a color map with help from GPS. The ability to display your path and record points of interest along the way opens up wide-ranging possibilities.

CASIO MOMENT LINK

Form a party on the spot with easy operation and no account registration. Share the fun by exchanging messages with other members whose locations appear on the map.

ACTIVITY

Information about your activities is displayed in real-time, including maps, route data, travel speeds, distances traveled, altitude and atmospheric pressure changes. The data helps you judge situations quickly and take appropriate action.

TOOL

After easy startup with the TOOL button, built-in sensors display changes in natural phenomena and other vital outdoor information such as:

Altimeter, Barometer, Compass, Sunrise/Sunset Data, Tide Graph, Activity Graph

MOMENT SETTER

Moment Setter provides notifications of vital information required for your outdoor experience. This includes sunrise, the best times for activities and more. It also helps you manage your pace and boost motivation.

FEATURED APPLICATIONS

The WSD-F20 is compatible with popular apps used by outdoor adventurers around the world.

- ViewRanger
- HOLE19
- Fishbrain
- Equilab
- Zombies, Run!
- SkiTracks
- MySwimPro
- Exercise Timer
- Glassy

protrek.casio.com

Mountain Guide Programs that the AMGA has to enforce this strict cancellation policy.

It may seem like an unnecessary additional expense, but the numbers don't lie. If you want to protect your educational and career investment, it just makes sense. For more information, head over to amga.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/.

FEATURED TECH TIP: "FRICTION HITCHES"

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

KNOW YOUR FRICTION HITCHES! FROM RESCUE TO RAPPELLING, THEY COME IN HANDY. PICTURED ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT WE HAVE THE PRUSSIK, AUTO-BLOCK, AND KLEIMHEIST.

PROGRAM MANUAL UPDATE

The AMGA is in the process of updating our entry-level Guide Program Manuals. The *Ski Guide Course Manual* is complete and was issued for the 2018 season SGCs. The Rock Guide Course manual is in process, and the Ice Instructor and Alpine Skills Course manuals should be revamped by the 2019 season.

Upon completion of each manual, students enrolled in these programs will receive a hard copy of the manual at the start of their course. If you have taken one of these courses in the past, please email the AMGA office for an updated PDF version. Hard copies of the new SGC and Alpine Guide Course manuals are available for members to purchase in our web store.

FEATURED TECH VIDEO: PASSING A WEIGHTED KNOT

AMGA Technical Director Dale Remsberg demonstrates how to perform a knot pass. Knot passes may need to be executed

in a number of different situations, like long lowers or getting past a section of rope with a core shot. The knot pass is part of the Rock Rescue Drill, which is assessed on the Advanced Rock Guide Course and Aspirant Exam.

Check out the video at amga.com/member-rock-videos

FIRST CERTIFIED ICE INSTRUCTORS AND NEW SPLITBOARD GUIDE LOGO

We are thrilled to announce that we have our very first two Certified Ice Instructors via the AMGA Ice Instructor Exam. Congratulations to Tim Farr and Doug Ferguson for completing their Ice Instructor Certification in February. The Ice Instructor Exam is a six-day exam, similar in format to the Rock Instructor Exam. The pilot IIE ran in North Conway, New Hampshire.

In 2014, the AMGA began allowing splitboarders to participate in and complete the Ski Guide track on their boards. In 2015, Brendan Burns and Eric Layton became the first candidates to pass the Ski Guide Exam on splitboards; however, the title they walked away with was still "Certified Ski Guide." We are excited to now have a splitboard-specific title and logo for Brendan, Eric, and their fellow Splitboard Guides.

Please note that in order to receive full IFMGA Certification, Splitboarders still need to pass a one-day ski assessment demonstrating they meet the ski standard; the IFMGA platform does not allow for splitboard use at this time.

SKI GUIDE COURSE VIDEO SUBMISSION

In 2019, the AMGA will begin to request submission of a movement video as part of the application process to the Ski Guide Course (SGC).

- Movement video submission will be **OPTIONAL for 2019 SGC** applications and **REQUIRED for 2020 SGC** applications.

The AMGA has high movement expectations for guides entering the ski discipline. To be successful in the program, students must have diverse skiing and riding abilities, a strong résumé of accomplishments, and proficiency with baseline technical skills. In addition, SGC students must be

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able to ski/ride with ample endurace, in all terrain, at a level well above the average recreationalist. Simply put, students must not be distracted from managing risk or course learnings due to a deficiency in personal skill.

The Ski Guide Course has one of the longest waitlists of any AMGA program, and spaces are limited. In 2018, we waitlisted 20 students who showed they met the prerequisites for the program at the time of enrollment, and an additional 29 throughout the season.

The Ski Guide Course also has one of the lowest completion rates of any AMGA program, and the vast majority of "incompletes" are given to students for movement re-exams.

SGC Completion Rates			
Year	SGC Completion Rate	Year	SGC Completion Rate
2018	81%	2015	75%
2017	74%	2014	75%
2016	73%	2013	67%

With space being limited on SGCs, video submission of an applicant's ski/riding movement will help ensure that students who are accepted into the program have the necessary prerequisite movement skills to fully participate.

GOALS OF THE SGC VIDEO REQUIREMENT

1. Increase student learning outcomes
2. Increase course completion rates
3. Ensure course spaces are awarded to skiers and riders with the prerequisite skiing/riding ability to be able to fully participate in the program
4. Increase overall risk management on SGCs

To see the full details on the timeline and implementation of the video submission and for what to include in your video, check out the SGC Video Submission Document on your myAMGA.

2018 MENTORSHIP CAMP DATES & LOCATIONS

Alpine Discipline Mentorship Camp sponsored by Arc'teryx

› Cascades, WA | August 8 & 9

Rock Discipline Mentorship Camp sponsored by Eddie Bauer

› Boulder, CO | September 10 & 11

See more on the 2018 Mentorship Camps on the AMGA Blog: amga.com/new-meaning-mentorship/.

MEET THE AMGA ADVOCACY TEAM

As America's voice for guides, the AMGA is ensuring our community is at the table and actively shaping the future of guiding.

Led by Advocacy and Policy Director Matt Wade and powered by a partnership with The North Face, the Advocacy Team is working to improve access for guiding and instructing in the US. This effort includes public policy work at the national level, serving as an education resource for land managers and AMGA members, support for members on access issues, and promoting stewardship.

The AMGA Advocacy Program is committed to a positive future for facilitated access in the U.S. Since January 2018, the Advocacy Team has secured guided access to the Ouray Ice Park in Colorado, opened access to the Gate Buttress in Utah (p. 30), and entered an agreement to strengthen the guiding community's relationship with the National Park Service (p. 32).

The AMGA Advocacy and Policy team—(see bios below)—is also available to assist AMGA members with permit applications and specific access questions.

Matt Wade, Advocacy & Policy Director

We are pleased to announce Matt Wade has joined the AMGA team as our new Advocacy and Policy Director. Matt will oversee all aspects of the AMGA's advocacy and policy efforts, including government relations and outreach, coordination with partner organizations, and assisting members with local access issues.

Matt comes to the AMGA from Southwest Colorado, where he founded and directed Peak Mountain Guides, a Ouray-based guide service with a staff of AMGA-certified instructors and guides. He brings an in-depth understanding of land management agencies and recreation permitting systems. As an advocate, Matt has worked on access issues related to guiding in wilderness, resource and agency capacity, and multiple-use interests. He is also an AMGA Rock and Ski Guide with 19 years of guiding experience.

Jason Keith, Senior Policy Advisor

Jason Keith is a longtime public lands and climbing advocate, and is joining the AMGA Advocacy team as Senior Policy Advisor. For over 17 years, Jason has worked with the Access Fund, where he manages government affairs related to recreational access and conservation/advocacy work on public lands. Jason is also the co-founder and managing director of Public Land Solutions, a non-profit dedicated to providing comprehensive recreation planning and stakeholder coordination to support effective and sustainable public-land solutions. «

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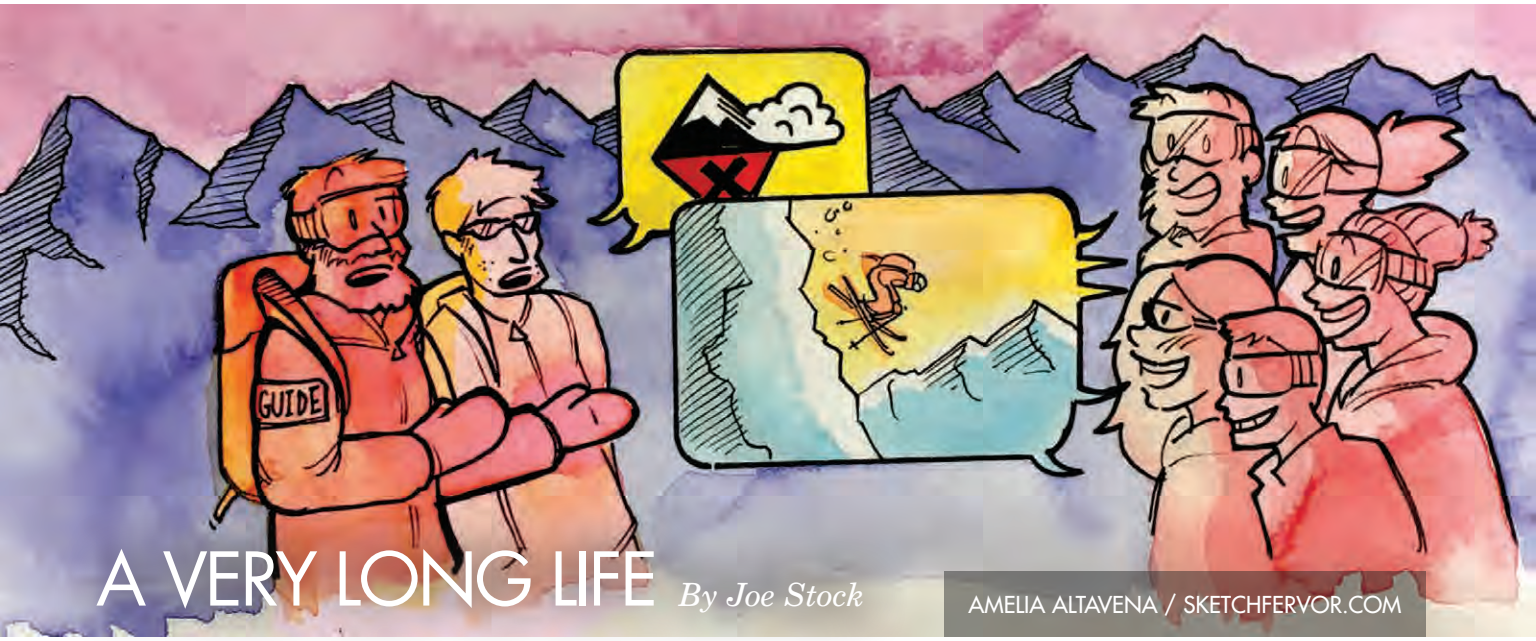

A VERY LONG LIFE

By Joe Stock

AMELIA ALTAVENA / SKETCHFERVOR.COM

CHRIS TUMBLED. AND TUMBLED. HE JUST KEPT falling, along with a mass of boulders and tangled rope. He fell past me, and then for another 100 feet, down the icy face of Mt. Cook, as I watched, helpless.

He came to a soft landing on the ropes, our weight counterbalanced on a single ice screw. From where I stood on my frontpoints, I could see blood streaming down his face.

Some communication and downclimbing revealed Chris was okay—he just had a twisted knee and a massive red laceration around his eye. But as we traversed the Linda Glacier and stumbled back to Plateau Hut, we could feel our fortress of invincibility starting to crumble.

A few months later, my climbing partner, Dan, was avalanched to his death in Fiordland. Then a falling block of ice broke my leg in Colorado.

At age 22, I realized I could die in the mountains. The thought terrified me. Alpine climbing suddenly felt out of my comfort zone—like steep creek boating or hard drugs. The juice was no longer worth the squeeze. So I quit.

• • •

For 10 years before those accidents, I powered my climbing with the naivety of youth. I climbed—and lived, for the most part—without fear. Conquering danger where others couldn't was my ticket to rise above the masses, to hold my head high.

Not too many generations ago, taking risks meant survival. Fight the saber-toothed tiger or die; impress good mates or your bloodline fades away. That instinct remains part of the human psyche.

After those accidents, I was done with crises. I tried careers in hydrology, writing, and photography. It didn't work—something was missing. I still craved the kind of danger that meant the difference between life and death.

Then I found guiding.

• • •

Whomph! *Whomph!*

The snowpack screamed warnings over the raging wind. But only Elliot and I could hear them. We were guiding six Belgians. They had seen the steep spines of Southcentral Alaskan snow in Teton Gravity Research films. They had to have a taste—conditions be damned. Our low-angle skin track and mellow descents weren't in their nine-day plan.

"I don't think you understand. We want steeper skiing," one of the Belgians volleyed.

Months of emails and phone calls relaying how "Alaska is different than the Alps" had missed the target. Explaining a wild snowpack—and the beauty of walking close to instability without touching it—doesn't translate well across languages, over ethernet cables and phone lines.

Later in the week, wind abated and snow stabilized. Elliot and I were able to set the Belgians free in the steepest chutes of their lives. They thanked us and apologized for a bit of shortsighted impatience.

Imparting years of experience mitigating consequences is a heavy task. Sometimes it's easy, like when clients watch rockfall destroy the Grand Couloir on Mont Blanc (again). Other times, when the hazard is lurking below a subliminal layer of powder, teaching people about it is nearly impossible, but compelling and heady in its own right. Now, I think, I thrive more on assessing danger than facing it.

Still I struggle. During the summers, when I'm guiding in Chamonix, I'm surrounded by some of the best technical American guides. Insecurity taps at my brain: *Why isn't the Grand Jorasses your goal? Why don't you pump laps on the Matterhorn?* My passion and curiosity for mountain travel are stronger than ever. But there is more. I want to die of old age. I love being with my wife. I owe it to my friends and family. And understanding the mountains—more so than gambling with them—is a problem I can work on for the rest of a very long life. «

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