

GUIDE

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DOUG ROBINSON:
THE GUIDING LIFE

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On the cover: Polly Harmer entranced by the last pitch of Goulotte à Nonyme, on the north face of the Grands Montets ridge of Aiguille Verte, Chamonix, France.

PHOTO BY ALEX BUISSE

This page: Andrew McLean scopes a line in Wolverine Cirque, Central Wasatch Mountains, Utah.

PHOTO BY TOMMY CHANDLER



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THE ACCESS POLITICS THAT HAVE FOR DECADES LIMITED THE GUIDING profession in America have begun to shift. Ahead of us is an unprecedented opportunity to shape the future of American climbing and ski guiding. Thanks to an exceptionally generous multi-year partnership commitment from The North Face, the AMGA will be rising to this challenge and launching a new access-advocacy program in 2017. One of our initial steps this spring will be bringing an Advocacy Director on board.

The new effort will center on supporting and training members to address local access issues and take our fight to Capitol Hill. Building on work we began in 2016, our efforts will be in close partnership with the Outdoor Access Working Group, Access Fund, American Alpine Club, and other allies (learn more in our Q&A with Brady Robinson of the Access Fund on page 18). Adding The North Face to our team will provide a huge boost to the reach of our message and the sophistication of our communications.

The Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act, which requires the federal government to track the outdoor recreation industry's contribution (estimated at \$646 billion) to the gross national product, was signed into law by President Obama on Dec. 9, 2016. In an increasingly rare event, the bill was approved unanimously in both the House and the Senate.

"This is a big, big deal for us because it takes us off the kids' table and puts us at the adult table. Now we can show how much we influence the national economy. Christmas came early for the outdoor industry," said Luis Benitez, director of the State of Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office and AMGA professional member.

While the passage of the Outdoor Rec Act and early success by the Outdoor Access Working Group in opening up Forest Service permitting hint at a positive forecast for guided access, access is not guaranteed. Many variables, including a new administration in Washington, factor in. As America's voice for guides, we have a responsibility to grow a sustainable, focused advocacy program to shape fundamental changes in guided access.

Success in these endeavors demands the active engagement of our entire membership. You'll be hearing a lot more about this, but to start I ask all members to extend an enormous thank you to The North Face for stepping up at just the right moment to make this effort possible! Together we can and will build a brighter future for guiding in America.

Onward,

Alex Kosseff, AMGA Executive Director
alex@amga.com
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AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE ELI HELMUTH AND SINGLE PITCH INSTRUCTOR RYAN BOGUS SKIN ACROSS A BLUSTERY EMERALD LAKE EN ROUTE TO DRAGON'S TAIL COULOIR, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO.

PHOTO BY ALTON RICHARDSON

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Chris Burk — **EQUIPPED** Essential Apps: 8 Mobile Sidekicks for Guides

Chris Burk is an AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide based out of Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2013, he developed the acclaimed tour-planning app GuidePace, the proceeds from which almost totally cover his habit of nerding out on his laptop in coffee shops.



Nate Disser — **IN MEMORIAM** Remembering Gary Falk

Nate Disser began guiding in 2002 in Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and is an AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide. He currently lives with his wife, Keeton, and their two children, Mason and Addison, in Ouray, Colorado, where he is the owner and director of San Juan Mountain Guides.



Angela Hawse — **EQUIPPED** Essential Apps: 8 Mobile Sidekicks for Guides

Angela Hawse has been guiding since 1985. In 2010, she became the sixth woman in the U.S. to earn her IFMGA certification. An AMGA Instructor Team Lead based in Ridgway, Colorado, Angela has worked for 11 years in rock, alpine, and ski disciplines. In 2011, she received the AMGA Guide of the Year Award.



Brady Robinson — **THE FUTURE OF ADVOCACY**

Brady Robinson is executive director of the Access Fund. Prior to his work there, Brady was a field instructor, program director, and risk manager at Outward Bound and an instructor for NOLS. He has climbed extensively in Patagonia, Pakistan, and across the United States. Brady resides in Boulder, Colorado.



Doug Robinson — **THE GUIDING LIFE** The Day Nothing Happened

Doug Robinson was the first president of the AMGA. His book, *The Alchemy of Action*, shares stories of climbing and guiding that illustrate the revelation that psychedelic hormones produced by our own brains are behind the high that climbers feel from surging upward over stone. Doug spent this winter snowed in at Kirkwood, California.



Mike Soucy — **MANAGING EXAM STRESS**

Mike Soucy is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide and member of the Instructor Team. He lives in Longmont, Colorado, and actively works in all mountain guiding disciplines for Colorado Mountain School and the AMGA.



Jack Tackle — **IN MEMORIAM** Remembering Kim Schmitz

Jack Tackle has been guiding since 1978 and earned his AMGA Alpine Guide certification in 1999. His climbing résumé includes 45 expeditions, including 33 to Alaska and 17 first ascents in the state. A senior guide at Exum Mountain Guides, Jack currently lives in Bozeman, Montana—his hometown and the location of his earliest climbs.



WOMEN PROS: 7 INSIGHTS

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A FEMALE GUIDE GIVEN YOU INSIGHT?

In a demanding profession like mountain guiding, representation, mentorship, and camaraderie prove crucial. Rates of female participation in mountain sports are large and growing, but representation in guiding remains low. As a result, most guides have little incidental opportunity to work with female mentors and colleagues. Recently I've worked to build a bigger network of female guide friends. The camaraderie this network provides has proven critical both to managing the isolating effects of being one of few and to weathering the standard challenges of the job.

—*Erica Engle, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide*

I'm not inspired by Wonder Woman. She cannot fail, and that's not inspiring. I'm inspired by people like Bev Johnson and Catherine Freer. These are women with flaws—women of greatness and failure whose passions drove them to achieve goals, set benchmarks for women, and ultimately perish while pursuing their dreams. I'm inspired by people who have to dig deep to accomplish goals. I love working with clients who are out of their element in the mountains but have some driving desire to experience a difficult day outdoors. Climbing in good style comes with failing.

—*Aimee Barnes, AMGA Rock Guide*

ERICA ENGLE NAVIGATES
FORBIDDEN PEAK'S EAST RIDGE IN
NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK,
WASHINGTON. PHOTO BY DAVID
MOSKOWITZ

FACING, TOP: SHELDON KERR,
LINDSAY MANN, AND ERIN SMART
CHEST BUMP AT BASE CAMP
ON THE BARNARD GLACIER,
WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS, ALASKA.
PHOTO BY KRYSTLE WRIGHT

FACING, BOTTOM: LINDSAY MANN
DOES A THOROUGH GEAR CHECK
WITH A GROUP OF TEENAGE GIRLS
HEADED INTO THE BELL LAKE YURT
FOR A THREE-DAY BACKCOUNTRY
TRIP. PHOTO BY KT MILLER

As a female guide, I don't always come in the package my clients expect, so it's been especially important to view guiding as a profession, work hard, and have a versatile toolbox. By having a variety of technical and interpersonal skills at my disposal and maintaining a high level of fitness, I give myself the highest chance of succeeding.

—Lindsay Mann, AMGA Apprentice Ski Guide

When I decided to pursue guiding as a career, I wondered if I would be strong enough, fast enough, tough enough, or smart enough. What I have come to realize is that I actually am all of those things. Women are gentle yet tenacious leaders. We are thoughtful teachers. And we are natural cheerleaders to our clients and peers. It has been enlightening to discover that I chose to work in a field where the pay and the opportunities for women are equal to our male counterparts—and where being a woman is, in my experience, celebrated.

—Tracy Martin, AMGA Rock Guide & Rock Instructor





I came to guiding later in life after working in atomic and laser physics, where I was one of two female graduate students in a university department of over 50, and woodworking and carpentry, where I was usually the only female in the shop or on the job site. Guiding is more gender inclusive than my prior professions. Most of the time, I think of myself as a guide, not a female guide.

—Karen Bockel, *AMGA Rock & Ski Guide*

The mountains don't care that I am a female, and I often forget that I am a minority when I'm out in the field. I just want to go to work and do my best at the profession that I have been trained in. My advice to all guides, men or women, is to go to work prepared and confident. If you have perceived limitations of yourself, figure out if you can train past them—and remember they are only as real as you make them.

—Erin Smart, *American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 8.5 percent of U.S. professions employ as few women as the AMGA has in female membership (certified guides are another, bleaker, story). Fortunately, the AMGA has realized that the mountain guiding profession only stands to gain from actively including, even recruiting, women into its ranks. Studies suggest that organizations made up of at least 30 percent women exhibit higher financial performance, experience lower turnover, demonstrate higher problem-solving capabilities, and have lower rates of injury and death. Working in one of the world's most male-dominated workplaces can have its challenges. But I love my job. And knowing that my participation is bettering the entire occupation motivates me all the more.

—Sheldon Kerr, *AMGA Ski Guide*



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



FACING: ERIN SMART TOPS OUT ON CUTTHROAT PEAK IN THE NORTH CASCADES, WASHINGTON. THIS PAGE: SHELDON KERR CAREFULLY PICKS HER WAY DOWN THE SOUTH RIDGE OF DORADO NEEDLE, NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK, WASHINGTON. **PHOTOS BY DAVID MOSKOWITZ**

MANAGING **EXAM STRESS**

THE SCIENCE OF ANXIETY AND OUR NEED TO SUCCEED

By Mike Soucy



STUDENTS ON AMGA ALPINE SKILLS COURSE A7 ASC 16 PRACTICING SHORTROPING SKILLS WITH MATT FARMER AND MARGARET WHEELER ON MOUNT BAKER, WASHINGTON. PHOTO BY ROBIN SCHOFIELD

54°18'2" E 54°33'7" N

ENVISION YOURSELF GUIDING AN EXAM group on a cloudy, rainy day in the Cascades. Your assignment is to get the team across a glacier to a (currently obscured) notch that will lead to the start of a technical rock climb. You are unsure of how far up this climb you'll be in the lead before you thankfully get to turn it over to the next candidate.

When the glacier steepens, you thumb to a page in your notebook containing a detailed tour plan with an overabundance of beta on the glacier's condition and

potential routes to the notch. With no clear answer in front of you, options bounce around your brain—you can't settle on one. Thirty seconds feels like 10 minutes.

If we were all in a room and took a survey to measure the number of people who have found themselves in a stressful exam scenario, guiding or elsewhere, would anyone not raise their hand? If you have lost sleep over a guide program, failed to perform to your physical capabilities, struggled with a decision in the moment, or forgotten a practiced technique, then your hand is held high.



INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT DURING AMGA
SKI GUIDE TRAINING, HALLETT PEAK, ROCKY
MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO.

PHOTO BY TOPHER DONOHUE

This year, hundreds of AMGA members will take exams in Instructor Programs as well as Rock, Alpine, and Ski disciplines. Somewhere around three-quarters of you will pass those exams. Congrats! The remainder will not pass and will have to retake the exam.

Following my first AMGA exam in 2008, I found myself in the latter group. I initially found the assessment process extremely stressful, and I struggled to relate the scenarios to my actual guiding experience. In retrospect, I could have done a better job anticipating and preparing for the stress-related challenges posed by the assessment process.

Like any other profession—and likely more so than your average desk job—guiding comes with its share of anxiety. On the job, we worry about minimizing risks while maximizing rewards for our clients and ourselves in the face of unpredictable mountain environments. We stress over things like deep slab instability and 10-centimeter ice screws. And, in doing so, we

help ensure that everyone makes it back to the car in one piece.

But on guide programs, with a yellow notebook hovering over our shoulder, real workplace stress morphs into something entirely different: a fear of failure and a struggle over being judged by our peers.

So, what is stress? Where does it come from and why? In order to minimize stress-induced underperformance, it is crucial to understand its causes. Only then can we take steps to mitigate stress and enhance performance.

THE SCIENCE OF STRESS

Stress is defined as “a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.”

Early humans developed a stress response to ensure survival. No longer quite so low on the food chain, we mostly outgrew the need to stress over survival a while back. However, stress remains a natural response to trying situations.



STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO CREATE A TOUR PLAN USING MAPS, COMPASSES, AND GPS IN AN AMGA ALPINE SKILLS COURSE.

PHOTO BY PETE KEANE

“I battled plenty of self-inflicted exam stress during the certification process... For me, the fear of failing sometimes outweighed the fear of dying—not a great place to be operating from.”

—E.D., American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, AMGA Instructor Team

The body often responds to these situations with an old standby—an adrenaline dump via the sympathetic nervous system that readies us for defense. Even though we rarely have to stare down a sabertooth tiger nowadays, this evolutionarily conditioned response to stress remains hardwired into our brains and now helps us to lift the occasional car off an infant.

The list of modern reactions that result from our fight-or-flight response is quite long and includes things like “gambling or impulse buying” and “excess belching and flatulence.” Despite any unsavoriness, these are unlikely to be the sole cause of failing a guide exam. Other symptoms of stress, however, can have a direct and negative impact on a guide’s performance—both on the job and during an exam. These can include increased heart rate, quickening respiration, tensing of muscles, or trembling and shaking. Racing thoughts, forgetfulness, and disorganization impair decision-making. Meanwhile, rapid or mumbled speech

compromises the quality of communication. The result is a vicious cycle, wherein stress leads to poor performance, which leads only to more stress.

STRESS, FROM EXAMS TO THE WORKPLACE

Back on the glacier, your thoughts have already begun to race when you glance back at the examiner and see a face stuck somewhere between indifference and impatience. As your co-candidate glares at you like she’s trying to tell you something (you have no idea what), you continue to fret about making the wrong choice, only increasing the likelihood of such a gaffe. As your heart rate quickens and your hands begin to shake, you fumble with your phone or GPS as you search for a solution.

If you lack experience guiding in the specific conditions or terrain you’re faced with, the challenges are even more pronounced. You will struggle taking on the leadership role and making decisions with confidence and conviction. If you head in the wrong direction, or apply an inappropriate

technique, it will feel difficult to error-correct. This will undoubtedly lead to more problems down the trail.

On AMGA programs, stress can be self-inflicted or caused by external factors. Self-inflicted stress sometimes comes from a fear of failure—no one wants to be judged negatively by their peers or to return home having failed an exam. When an examiner presents a candidate with a situation that challenges their stores of experience and ability to problem-solve, that fear of failure exposes itself in the form of stress.

The list of possible external stressors is endless, but two factors seem to derail aspiring guides on a repeat basis: roleplaying and environmental hazards. Roleplaying can create an awkward dynamic for candidates, in which it is difficult to present one's true self for evaluation. Impatient guides who try to intervene while playing the role of clients can easily throw a candidate off their game. Meanwhile, the examiner must remain neutral while making observations so as to avoid adding to a guide's stress.

Environmental hazards like poor weather, unstable snow or rock, and complex, potentially dangerous terrain are obvious sources of anxiety for all of us. These are real and can kill us and our guests, and they do not disappear once the exam has ended.

The worst case for you on an exam would be a downward spiral of mistakes leading up to the end of your lead or the examiner stepping in. If such a reaction were to happen while guiding actual clients, however, the resulting mistakes could have serious consequences. To avoid catastrophe, it is crucial that all guides possess the skills to work through complex problems in potentially stressful situations. The ability to cope and perform under pressure will not only help you succeed on the exam, but also sculpt you into a skilled mountain guide.

GET SMART

So, how do we outsmart our own brains? Many candidates talk about “figuring out” how to take an exam—and there's something to that. Developing mechanisms for coping with stressors is an important element of any guide's training and prep work.

Mitigating stress starts long before the approach. We are more prone to stress reactions when fatigued, dehydrated, or hungry, so simply eating well, hydrating properly, and ensuring you have enough rest prior to exam day are the first steps to overcoming anxiety.

Guides should prepare for each day with a list of anticipated hazards and a plan for managing the challenges and risks associated with each. For example, a solid navigational plan in the form of notes, photos, and GPS will help you to move efficiently through complex terrain in poor visibility; increased security leads to decreased stress.

Just like smoothing out a complex transition or learning to route-find efficiently, stress management will improve with increased familiarity in varied terrain and conditions while in a leadership role. Less experienced guides should expect to be challenged by frequent encounters with unfamiliar situations. Guides with fewer opportunities to lead real clients must commit to dedicated training and mentorship. Seek out

5 TIPS FOR WEATHERING EXAM STRESS

1. Study up.

Visit the site of the exam at some point before exam day so the stress of the unknown dissipates. For some, an extended stay helps to become comfortable with the new environment. For others, it can be just as stressful to “over prepare,” so a brief shakedown is best.

2. Develop healthy habits.

Success begins long before you reach the trailhead. Drinking three beers at the end of an exam day may relax you for that evening, but it will dehydrate you and make you feel lethargic the next morning. Instead, watch a movie or read a book to get your mind off the things that went wrong that day or what's coming tomorrow, and get a good night's rest.

3. Error-correct like a pro.

When you make a mistake on an exam, take a deep breath, sing your favorite rock song, and move on. Allowing yourself to downward-spiral could cost you the exam; it's better to fail in style rather than fail miserably.

4. Guide like you normally would.

Exam day is your day to guide; treat it like any other day at the office. Prepare to the best of your abilities, and then walk in there like you're the boss.

5. Breathe.

When things get difficult, slow it down. You often have more time than you think. Take a deep breath, consider your options, and execute confidently.

unique and complex problems to solve in a less daunting, low consequence environment, alongside someone who's been there before. Train your brain to respond constructively, by connecting new problems with familiar techniques.

OH SH*T. NOW WHAT?

Adequate preparation will never eliminate stress entirely. Fortunately, when stress does emerge, one solution to the fight-or-flight response is built into our practice: physical activity. When possible, promptly skiing down the hill, climbing a pitch, or digging a snow profile can help alleviate some of the symptoms of stress.

Often, however, we are captive, tied to an anchor or leading clients. In these situations a more internal approach may be necessary. By finding a way to trigger the relaxation response, we can coax our brain to send out neurochemicals that directly counteract the symptoms of the fight-or-flight response. To activate the relaxation response, think of a word or phrase that has positive meaning to you. When

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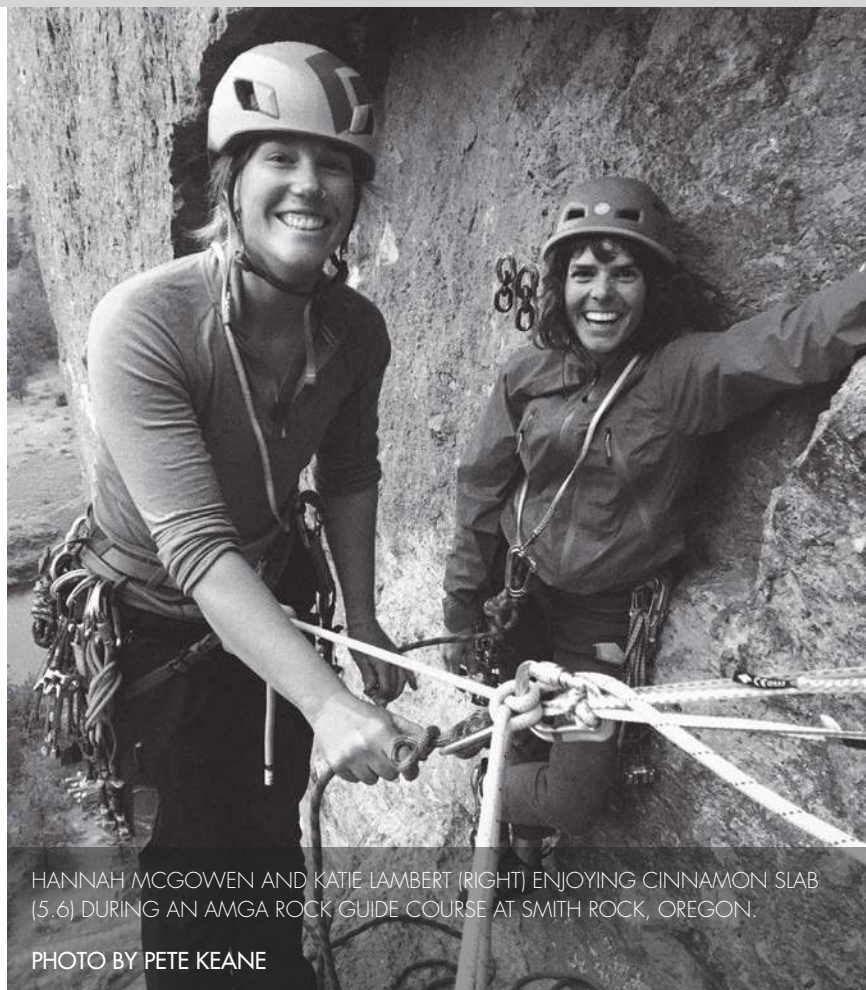
PROTECTION IN ALL CONDITIONS

Photo: Gabe Rogel

Athlete: Brenton Reagan

"Gary Dickson was the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association president for years and did a lot of examining. He reckons that candidates have to approach exams as 'just another day in the mountain office'... for maximum performance and minimal stress."

—A.K., American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, AMGA Instructor Team



HANNAH MCGOWEN AND KATIE LAMBERT (RIGHT) ENJOYING CINNAMON SLAB (5.6) DURING AN AMGA ROCK GUIDE COURSE AT SMITH ROCK, OREGON.

PHOTO BY PETE KEANE

you begin to feel overcome by stressful thoughts, just take a deep breath and repeat this mantra, which has hopefully been connected to your happy place. For me, it was "Don't stop guiding." This phrase helped me to see myself crushing whatever it was I was doing and minimize any stressful reactions. It still serves as a tool that I reach for when things get tricky.

Altering your sense of reality can also help outsmart internal stressors. No, this does not mean taking all of your programs in Washington or Colorado and playing Pink Floyd on your Bluetooth speaker. Rather, try embracing the role-playing challenges that exist on AMGA programs. By immersing yourself in the alternate reality of an exam and treating each assignment as another day at work, you allow your true guiding abilities to shine through and dissipate stress.

Likewise, examiners and candidates in client mode must take their roles seriously. Remember that negative body language or facial expressions can really throw a stressed candidate for a loop. By practicing patience, empathy, and attentiveness, we can support the guide on the sharp end.

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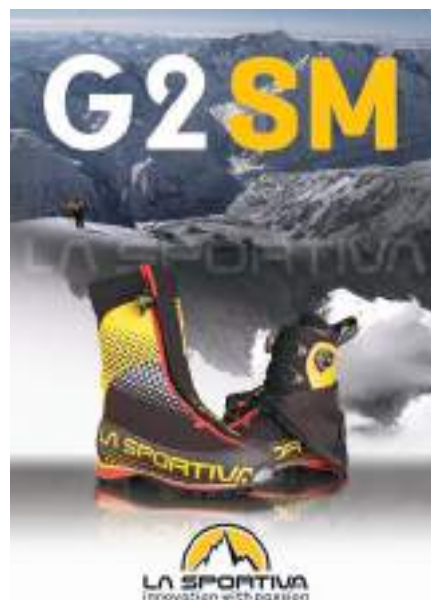
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"Humility and a cool head are what got me through my exams. All of us—from the most experienced mountain guide to the first-day-on-the-job SPI—are going to make mistakes. The trick is identifying them quickly, acknowledging an error to your guests [or examiner] if appropriate, then correcting it and moving on... Breathe, senders, breathe!"

—R.C., American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide

A SUCCESS STORY

You made an error in getting across the glacier to the start of the climb. You zigged when you should have zagged and arrived at an obviously unstable crevasse bridge. This time, however, you regroup. After a few deep breaths, you take a quick glance at your GPS and a recent photo of the glacier. You reroute the team along the crack to a more ideal spot for crossing. The next thing you know, you catch a break and pop through the ceiling of clouds to the start of your climb. Bluebird. Next candidate is up!

All professions have their stressors, and ours is no different. Stress plays a significant role in our guide training and continues to exist in the workplace, keeping us on our toes and, ideally, helping to keep us and our clients alive.

Without the proper tools to manage stress, the ability to reduce risk for ourselves and our clients will most certainly be compromised. Stress management is a skill that should be trained—just like navigation on a glacier or movement over rock. Thorough planning and prep, excellent self-care, the ability to error correct, and an openness to feedback are all ways to minimize complacency and encourage us to continue on the path to improvement «



PHOTO BY JAYSON SIMONS-JONES



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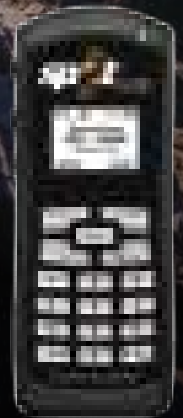
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DENALI, THE TALLEST PEAK IN NORTH AMERICA AT 20,310'. IN 2011 THE AMGA, ACCESS FUND, AND AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB COLLABORATED ON AN ADVOCACY EFFORT TO FIGHT A PROPOSED \$500 SPECIAL USE FEE TO CLIMB DENALI.

PHOTO BY PAUL ZIZKA

THE FUTURE OF ADVOCACY

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRADY ROBINSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACCESS FUND

GUIDE BULLETIN: YOU'VE BEEN AT THE HELM OF THE ACCESS FUND FOR NEARLY A DECADE. WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU'VE LEARNED?

Brady Robinson: Changing public policy is hard. But it's doable. And the way to do it is to work in broad coalitions of like-minded organizations to collaborate on solutions. At the Access Fund we've seen our political clout change dramatically over the last five years. Outdoor recreation advocacy as a whole is being taken more seriously. The number-one reason is that we've evolved to operate together. Working on all forms of recreation—such as hiking, boating, mountain biking—through the Outdoor Alliance is one of the best things we've ever done for climbing access. The broad base and inclusive platform get taken seriously in Washington, D.C., and we can't be accused of being “just climbers” anymore. Finding shared interest has been the key to our success.

GB: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE AMGA AS IT CONTINUES TO ADVOCATE FOR GUIDES NATIONALLY?

BR: We've worked alongside the AMGA on policy for many years and shared some wins for guides and for the climbing community as a whole. We should deepen and extend that collaboration and continue to discover those areas of mutual interest. At times I've seen guides become narrowly focused on niche policy aspirations that would be very difficult to achieve alone and overnight. For example, advocating for special national status to operate on federal lands. It's not a hopeless idea, but it's also not the place to start. Instead the AMGA should be at the table, putting in the work of coalition building with organizations that already have a lot of political clout, like the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), REI, NOLS. This professionalization is starting to happen through the Outdoor Access Working Group. If AMGA commits

the time and money necessary, and is willing to operate over the long haul, they'll be able to have a lasting impact.

GB: INCREASING ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES IS A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR THE FUTURE OF GUIDING. WOULD COALITION BUILDING RESULT IN A WATERED-DOWN AGENDA?

BR: As the AMGA becomes more successful in public policy and earns the right to be a leader in this arena, you'll find that more people are interested in what the AMGA has to say. That may open up the possibility of having a conversation about credential-based access. Right now, there are too many groups with more influence that don't see the world that way. The beauty of democracy is that when you work in coalitions for the common good, your own political clout goes up, and you put yourself in a better position to advocate for your own interests. But I'll be honest—it's time consuming and difficult. Any policy work is almost always an exercise in delayed gratification. You have to see incremental improvements as victories.

GB: WHAT CAN WE EXPECT UNDER A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION?

BR: There are a lot of unknowns, but it's reasonable to assume we will continue to have a fair amount of political influence moving forward, partly because of momentum created through OIA and Outdoor Alliance. We're seeing the outdoor



BRADY ROBINSON OF THE ACCESS FUND.

PHOTO BY NATE PTACEK

recreation economy being taken more seriously. Bigger orgs like The Wilderness Society are seeing recreationists less as a problem and more as a solution to recruit the next generation of conservationists. These are important shifts and opportunities for the AMGA. All that good news aside, there's a lot of work to do. It's a crucial time for all recreation advocates to get serious and shelve our differences. That includes the AMGA. I see a very positive vision from AMGA leadership—not only what to achieve, but also how to achieve it. Building a world-class, albeit small, policy shop is no small task, and success will demand support, humility, and patience from all sides. I for one would like to see this happen and will do what I can to support the AMGA. «



SAM SMOOTHY

Range MIPS
Helmet
Giro.com/range



GIRO

**FIT IS
FUNCTION**

ESSENTIAL APPS: 8 MOBILE SIDEKICKS FOR GUIDES

By Chris Burk and Angela Hawse



FROM TRIP PLANNING AT HOME TO DECISION-MAKING IN THE FIELD, GUIDES HAVE ACCESS TO ever more sophisticated mobile tools. Professionalize your craft and enhance your clients' experience with these favorite mobile apps.



NOAA HIGH-DEF RADAR

Created: 2011

Platforms: Android, iOS

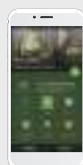
Price: \$1.99 (AppStore); \$2.99 (Google Play)

NOAA Hi-Def Radar's clean user interface lets you quickly and easily track the movement of precipitation-producing storms. It's also simple to bring up cloud cover, recent lightning strike locations, and an assortment of other valuable data when you're out in the field.

I was halfway up Triple Overhangs, an alpine rock climb in the Wasatch, when I downloaded the app, which has become my favorite for monitoring weather while guiding. I was contemplating some threatening clouds building to the west. Within 60 seconds of tapping "download," I had a real-time animated radar map on my phone—and a storm alert indicating that we were about to get blasted. The data, pulled from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Agency and presented in an easily digestible format by app developer WeatherSphere, has not let me down yet.

Seasonal afternoon thunderstorms can be tricky to deal with as a guide, as you balance risk management with client reward. On any given day with 30-percent chance of storms,

it's likely that you won't feel a drop of rain; then again, you could get hit hard. We've all sat at belays or below climbs, looking at clouds in the distance, wondering what's coming or what might be hidden from our view. If you have data service, NOAA Hi-Def Radar offers one more piece of information to help with your mental arithmetic. —CB



MOUNTAIN HUB

Created: 2016

Platforms: Web-based, with Android and iOS apps

Price: Free; a Pro Subscription starting at \$150 for AMGA Guides

Building upon the AvaNet platform, Mountain Hub combines route planning tools with real-time, community-based mapping. The service crowdsources conditions, hazards, and weather with the aim of making backcountry travel safer for all users.

With a Pro Subscription, you can access the highest quality map baselayers available, including CalTopo USGS, CanMatrix, Swiss Topo, Austria Topo, IGN Topo, Norway Topo, Japan Topo—and a growing list of others. The paid subscription also provides access to online route planning

tools that transfer to mobile, where you're able to overlay a blue-dot locator that tracks your route.

On a recent ski mountaineering trip to the Antarctic Peninsula, I tested the beta version of the app on an Android device. I was able to cache maps beforehand, navigate, create waypoints, and submit observations and conditions that geocached photos at each location. They uploaded flawlessly when I was back in the world of WiFi.

Past users of the AvaNet platform can expect all of their professional obs to transfer over to Mountain Hub later this winter, including the snow profile generator and SP2 data. —*AH*



CAIRN

Created: 2015

Platform: iOS

Price: Free

Cairn has two core features with the common goal of promoting safety in the mountains. The first is an automated version of the check-out/check-in protocol that guide services use for managing risk. You specify a contact person, and Cairn informs that person of your trip plan and alerts them if you do not return on schedule. The second is a crowdsourced map of cellular coverage, which could also be useful in an emergency.

Personally, I'm most excited about the check-out/check-in feature, especially if the Cairn team develops a platform for guide services to conveniently keep track of numerous groups in the field. I spoke briefly with co-founder Ali Alami, and it sounds like this might be in the cards, along with a host of other features. —*CB*



EARTHMATE

Created: 2015

Platforms: Android, iOS

Price: Free with Garmin's two-way satellite subscription, starting at \$12.99/month

Earthmate enables users to pair Garmin's line of satellite tracking, messaging, and navigation devices (previously by Delorme) to a phone via Bluetooth. The app allows you to take advantage of the InReach's satellite connection from your phone screen, making texting, emailing, and acquiring weather reports faster and more user friendly.

When using the app for messaging, threads are archived, making it easy to reach frequent contacts; it's also possible to access your entire contact list, as well as a list of favorites set up online. Settings let you optimize data usage of both the device and the Earthmate app to save battery life or to enable constant pinging to check for messages.

All communication using the app is sent with an embedded link to a topographic map, showing recipients the exact location and coordinates of the sender. In an emergency, this would give rescuers vital information and help with response time.

The fast and reliable Iridium satellite constellation, which powers the InReach, works anywhere in the world. You can modify your plan monthly based on your usage needs, and group plans are available for organizations looking for a reliable satellite communication for their guides. —*AH*



ARC'TERYX MOUNTAIN CONDITIONS REPORT

Created: 2016

Platforms: Web-based, with iOS app

Price: Free

Arc'teryx Mountain Conditions Report launched south of the Canadian border last summer, extending a valuable information-sharing platform to AMGA certified guides and beyond. Unlike other crowd-sourced apps for mountain conditions, the Arc'teryx MCR sources field conditions and trip reports exclusively from certified guides, ensuring reliable information.

By default, the app organizes reports by the region where you're currently located. However, users may access information from other regions through their settings. The app features an interactive map, with accurate location tagging that highlights real-time conditions. With enough guide participation, this tool may eventually replace email-based information exchanges currently used by many guides.

The app also aims to help keep recreationists safe by giving them access to guide-sourced information that enables them to make more informed decisions in the field. It's also a unique opportunity for guides to connect directly with the recreational community. The app gives guides the option of posting a public profile (including a logo, certifications, and a brief bio) that could help to boost both your visibility as a professional guide and a general awareness of the value of training and certification. —*AH*



THEODOLITE

Created: 2009

Platform: iOS

Price: \$5.99

A theodolite is a surveying instrument with a rotating telescope used for measuring horizontal and vertical angles. This augmented-reality app is a digital version of the instrument that you can take backcountry skiing. The main screen of the app uses your phone's camera to take geographic measurements, including horizontal angle, vertical angle, bearing, UTM coordinates, and elevation, which are all overlain atop the camera view.

Theodolite is great for quickly making observations in the field. The display makes it easy to measure slope angles on the horizon and alpha angles for slide paths. By taking photos through the app, you can also quickly and thoroughly document avalanche observations without getting out your notebook.

It's worth noting that for inclination measurements, the accuracy of cell phone hardware is quite good (± 0.1 degrees), but for bearing measurements it is less accurate (± 10 degrees). —CB



GAIA GPS

Created: 2009

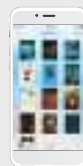
Platforms: Android, iOS

Price: \$19.99

With so many options for GPS topographic mapping apps, is this one really worth the price tag? In a word, yes. Widely recognized as the best mobile app for topo maps, Gaia sets itself apart from the competition with its user-friendly interface.

Gaia GPS shares many features with other GPS topo apps. There are numerous map layers to choose from, including ones that work internationally. You can download maps for offline use. It's also easy to import and export routes.

Using Gaia is fast and intuitive, and it works great for plotting routes. Even on a cell phone, I find it to be just as fast as using a laptop. For tour planning in the field, the app combination of Gaia GPS and GuidePace is the ticket. Gaia gives you the distance and elevation between your waypoints, and GuidePace estimates travel time. —CB



iBOOKS

Created: 2010

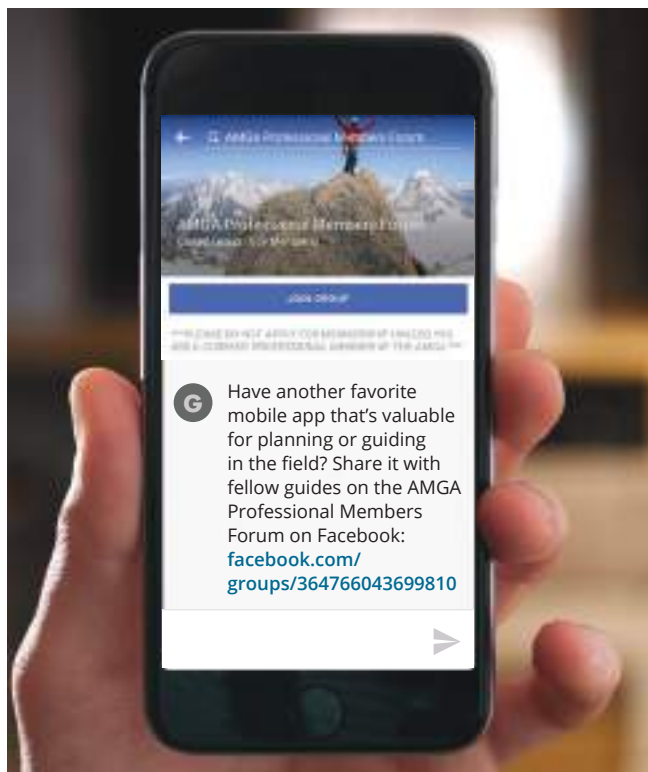
Platform: iOS

Price: Free

Along with navigation and weather apps, iBooks has become one of my most-used apps in the field. It serves as my go-to file cabinet where I store all the information I need to access on a trip, including emergency response plans, trip rosters, itinerary, contact information for guests, lesson plans, screenshots of maps or photos out of guidebooks, terrain atlases, run lists, radio frequencies, manuals, and more.

I simply convert anything I want to save to my iPhone into a PDF and drag and drop it directly into iBooks on my computer, in a folder I have created specifically for the trip. These folders sync seamlessly with an iPhone. I also have the option of emailing a PDF to myself and saving it directly in iBooks on my phone.

Accessing the documents is easy, doesn't take much battery power, and keeps all your key information organized in one location on phone and desktop. It is also a great place to store digital books for light reading or reference on any trip. —AH «



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GARY **FALK**

A WARRIOR'S LIFE

By Nate Disser

I FIRST MET GARY FALK ON AN ADVANCED ROCK Guide Course in September 2006. At the time, Gary was new to guiding, but it was clear he was serious about the profession and committed to the process of furthering his career in the industry. Gary and I possessed many similarities, and we quickly struck up a friendship that lasted until his passing on July 23, 2016.

Gary grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and eventually found his way to the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, where he received a degree in kinesiology. A natural athlete, Gary took up climbing and skiing in Colorado, but it wasn't until he moved to Jackson, Wyoming, after college that he truly became passionate about these pursuits.

In 2004, Gary had the opportunity to begin guiding for Exum Mountain Guides in the Tetons, prompting him to pursue mountain guiding as his full-time career. Gary went on to become an IFMGA Certified Guide, focusing his schedule on guiding clients in the Tetons, the San Juan Mountains, and Denali National Park.

While Gary and I were training for and participating in our AMGA Rock Guide Exam in 2007 in Red Rock, Nevada, I introduced Gary to Kate Skonieczki, the woman he would marry. Gary and Kate had two boys, Anders and Donovan, and Gary balanced the demands of mountain guiding and a



PHOTO BY STEPHEN KOCH
INSET: PHOTO BY ANGELA HAWSE

fulfilling family life with grace and humility.

He possessed a well-rounded skill set that was perfectly suited to mountain guiding. Gary was firm and authoritative when he needed to be, yet caring and empathetic at just the right moments. His hardworking nature, combined with his thirst for knowledge, served him in innumerable ways as he practiced, applied, and perfected his skill set. Gary never stopped striving to become better at his craft, and on that journey, he positively impacted the lives of his clients, other climbers, friends, and loved ones.

Gary died while guiding clients on the Grand Teton. He was attempting to free a stuck belay device when the personal tether attached to his anchor failed. His fall into Valhalla Canyon (known in Norse mythology as the final resting place of those who have died in combat) reminds us that Gary embodied the qualities of a warrior, having overcome many challenges on his journey.

Though tragic, Gary's passing must serve as a reminder to all of us in the guiding profession: we must never give up the endless pursuit to become better at what we do. We must not relinquish our desire for knowledge in the sometimes ego-driven culture of mountain guiding. We must rail against complacency.

As Gary would say, "When you start looking like you know what you're doing, I'll stop telling you what to do." «



KIM SCHMITZ

ENDURANCE

By Jack Tackle

KIM SCHMITZ WAS A FORCE OF NATURE AND life. I first met him on Guides Hill in the Tetons in 1979. He came roaring out of his tent cabin at the old Exum Mountain Guides camp. His piercing steel-blue eyes and jaw like Jack Palance—combined with his towering physique—were, frankly, alarming and intimidating.

I knew of his speed climbs on Yosemite walls and first ascents with Jim Bridwell, including Half Dome's Zenith the year before. His recent expeditions to Nepal and Pakistan were already legendary. His résumé included successes on Great Trango, Gaurishankar, plus Uli Biaho—likely the world's first grade VII wall, which he completed with John Roskelley, Ron Kauk, and Bill Forest on an 11-day epic.

Because I only had been climbing for six years, I looked at Kim as some kind of god. I could never imagine being that good and strong and accomplished. As it turned out, all of the guides at Exum revered Kim in the same way. Even Chuck Pratt knew he was the best of them all.

A few years later, in 1981, I went to Mt. Siguniang in China with Kim, Jim Donini, and Jim Kanzler. Although we did not succeed in reaching the summit of the unclimbed peak via the north face, Kim and I became fast friends.

When I was invited to become an Exum guide the following summer, Kim became my mentor. I cooked for both of us, and he showed me the ropes. We would climb on our days off to become familiar with routes I would later guide. I would "audit" his assignments on bigger routes on the Grand. I soaked up Kim's knowledge of the range and his climbing acumen. As a guide he was fast, efficient, bold.



PHOTO BY JOHN ROSKELLEY

INSET: PHOTO BY ANGUS M. THUERMER JR./WYOFIL

In 1983, Kim's life changed forever following an accident that occurred while he was guiding the Jensen Ridge of Symmetry Spire. While running out the rope without a belay or protection on easy ground around the fourth pitch, Kim lost his balance due to what he referred to as "back pressure" on the rope, even though he had asked his client not to touch the rope. He tried to regain his balance by grabbing a hold, but it broke off and he plummeted 80 feet onto a ledge.

He shattered both tib/fibs, compound fractured his legs, severely broke his back and teeth, and suffered a serious head injury. After 26 reconstructive surgeries on his legs and years of physical therapy, he returned to guide at Exum for a short time. But it proved too painful for him to guide both safely and with an enjoyment.

The remaining years of Kim's life saw enormous growth of his character, spurred by the constant challenges he faced medically and psychologically. Climbing and guiding had been his whole life. He was now faced with having to redefine himself. In recent years, Kim faced new health challenges, including prostate cancer, colon cancer, and MRSA, all of which he survived. In terms of tenacity, he never stopped being the climber I met in 1979.

Recently I realized that what I admired most about Kim was the person that he became after his life-changing accident, rather than solely the climber he had been before. Gentle, thoughtful, and nonjudgmental was his *modus operandi*. He was the most literate person I have ever known. Kim wasn't bitter; he embraced the good in each day.

Life's unexpected turns take us to new, uncharted territory. Kim's difficult path led him to enlightenment that I can only hope to achieve for myself someday. «

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FORMULATING AN INTERNATIONAL GUIDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Since earning IFMGA recognition in 1997, the AMGA has discussed how it can best uphold its end of IFMGA reciprocity. Reciprocity is a condition of our membership in the IFMGA that requires the AMGA to allow guides from other countries to work in the U.S. (when possible, given our country's strict permit structure) and vice-versa. As the number of American IFMGA Certified Guides grows and our international footprint increases, the issue has become even more pressing. During the 2016 Annual Meeting, the AMGA Board of Directors met to discuss formalizing an international guiding code of conduct to provide a set of guidelines for AMGA certified guides working abroad.

In order to uphold IFMGA reciprocity and ensure that American guides continue to have the opportunity to work abroad, AMGA members must respect local guides and guide requirements in other countries. To do so, guides must research the local regulations that govern scope of practice, permitting, and resource protection prior to embarking on an international trip. If that research shows a guide will not comply with local regulations, the guide should have the confidence to decline the work offer, in order to avoid jeopardizing future opportunities in the area for other AMGA guides.

The Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG) provides an example of the necessity of researching international guiding regulations. The ACMG has a robust and relatively stringent scope of practice, which allows for guides to work unsupervised in certain types of terrain based on their level of training and certification. The AMGA scope of practice will closely resemble this type of approach. Canada also requires permits for guiding in different areas, similar to our own system of permitted access. The ACMG has made permits and insurance available to IFMGA Guides to uphold their responsibility to provide reciprocity.

The AMGA will continue to consider how we can provide reciprocity here in the U.S. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact AMGA Executive Director Alex Kosseff at alex@amga.com. —*Geoff Unger, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide*

AMGA TO UPDATE MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAM MANUALS

For more than 30 years, the AMGA has set the standard for climbing and skiing expertise in America's mountains. The AMGA will make this knowledge more accessible by updating AMGA Guide Manuals for students on our Mountain Guide Programs.

We are updating these manuals in response to continued feedback from members looking for a compact and user-friendly tool to access AMGA curricula while in the field. AMGA students and candidates will be able to carry a

manual while on our programs, for use as a note-taking and reference tool throughout the day. We expect to see these updated manuals become an integral part of a guide's education. Each manual will also offer students a physical, professionally produced resource to refer back to following the conclusion of their course. —*Dana Richardson, Strategic Partnerships Manager*

SCOPE OF PRACTICE UPDATE

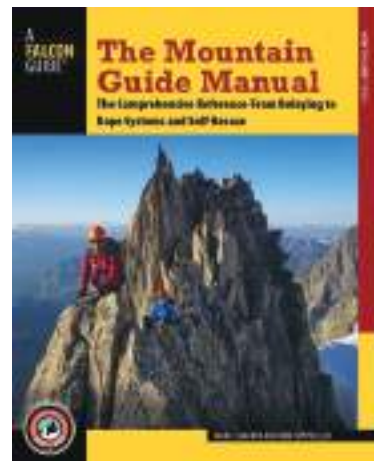
In May 2015, the AMGA Board of Directors began work on adopting a new Scope of Practice (SOP) document, which would replace the Terrain and Supervision Guidelines. The SOP aims to professionalize American guiding and instruction by defining the terrain in which AMGA members at various levels of training may work. On Jan. 28, the Board met to make a decision on implementing the SOP. Stay tuned for more details heading your way in member emails. —*Alex Kosseff, Executive Director*

COPPOLILLO AND CHAUVIN COLLABORATE ON DEFINITIVE RESOURCE FOR GUIDES

The Mountain Guide Manual, written by IFMGA Guides Marc Chauvin and Rob Coppolillo and published by Falcon Guides, is due out in May 2017. The volume will hit shelves as an AMGA-recommended title and represents a group effort from the guiding community as a whole. The book compiles and distills decades' worth of skills as applicable to personal climbing as they are to mountain guiding.

"A lot of the skills, techniques, and philosophies are useful when you're recreating," Chauvin says. "Using these skills will also lead to better understanding of guide techniques you'll learn on your courses. It all becomes an integral part of your climbing and your work."

The idea to write the book arose during a casual conversation between Coppolillo and Chauvin at the 2014 AMGA Annual Meeting. After two years of planning, proposing, researching, writing, and editing, the two guides delivered the final manuscript on Sept. 1, 2016, coming in at 130,000 words and nearly 250 photos. The book will serve as a useful tool to spare aspiring guides (and their examiners) some of the stress and bewilderment inherent in the course of becoming a guide. —*GB*



AMGA TECH TIPS: NOW IN ROCK & ICE

Given the success of the AMGA's series of technical videos, which began three years ago, the AMGA has joined forces with Outdoor Research and *Rock & Ice* to produce Mountain Masters. Mountain Masters runs as a monthly column in the print magazine that highlights a technique taught in an AMGA tech video. Mountain Masters first ran in the Oct. 2016 issue of *Rock & Ice*. —Dana Richardson, Strategic Partnerships Manager

MEET YOUR NEW INSTRUCTOR TEAM MEMBERS

We are happy to introduce the three newest AMGA instructors:



Emilie Drinkwater

Emilie received her American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Certification in April 2015. She has been guiding since 2001 and will be instructing introductory level rock, alpine, and ski courses. Emilie lives in Salt Lake City and serves as an athlete ambassador for Outdoor Research.



Ian Nicholson

Ian received his American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Certification in April 2015. Ian has been guiding since 2005 and will be instructing introductory level rock, alpine, and ski courses. You may recognize Ian from his work at SuperTopo as author and gear editor. Ian lives in Seattle.



Joey Thompson

Joey received his American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Certification in February 2014. He has been guiding since 2001 and will be instructing introductory level rock and alpine courses. A senior guide at Colorado Mountain School in Boulder, Joey lives in Erie, Colorado. He also serves as the director of avalanche programming at CMS.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW IFMGA GUIDES!

The following guides earned American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Certification between June 1 and Dec. 31, 2016. Visit our website for a complete list of American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Certified Guides.

Erica Engle
Ben Gardner
Christopher Marshall
Micah Rush
Erin Smart
Tino Villanueva

EDGEWORKS CLIMBING JOINS RANKS OF ACCREDITED BUSINESSES

In September 2016, Tacoma-based climbing gym and guide service Edgeworks Climbing successfully completed the accreditation review process to become an AMGA Accredited Business. Edgeworks is owned by AMGA Rock and Alpine Guide Tod Bloxham. —Ed Crothers, Climbing Instructor Program Director

AMGA HOLDS FIRST ROCK MENTORSHIP CAMP

On Sept. 21 and 22, 2016, the AMGA held its first Rock Discipline Mentorship Camp in partnership with Arc'teryx. The two-day event, held in Boulder, Colorado, consisted of two-on-one rock discipline training with AMGA Technical Director Dale Remsberg.

We selected AMGA members Billy Haas and Lindsey Hamm from a pool of 45 competitive applications. The camp offered Haas and Hamm the opportunity to further their skill sets as professional guides.

Keep an eye out for information on 2017 Mentorship Camps in AMGA member emails later this year. —Jane Anderson, Guide Program Manager



LINDSEY HAMM AND BILLY HAAS HONE THEIR SKILLS IN ELDORADO CANYON, COLORADO, DURING THE FIRST ARC'TERYX ROCK DISCIPLINE MENTORSHIP CAMP.

PHOTO BY DALE REMSBERG

INCLUSION COMMITTEE FOCUSES EFFORTS ON MENTORSHIP

The AMGA Inclusion Committee—created in 2015 in order to facilitate inclusivity for women and other underrepresented groups within the organization—has begun work on increasing mentorship opportunities to help aspiring instructors and guides navigate their careers. The Inclusion Committee launched its mentorship initiative at the 2016 Annual Meeting with two roundtable clinics addressing current mentoring in the AMGA and a networking lunch to connect potential mentors and mentees. Members interested in mentoring others or seeking mentorship can find more information at facebook.com/groups/AMGAMentoringUNOFFICIAL. —*Derek DeBruin (AMGA Rock Guide, Rock Instructor, SPI) and Erica Engle (American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide)*

IN THE MEDIA: ALASDAIR TURNER ON THE FROZEN BEAUTY OF ANTARCTICA

This fall, Mashable featured a photo essay on Antarctica by AMGA Rock Guide Alasdair Turner. Check out his otherworldly images in “The Frozen Beauty of Antarctica” at mashable.com/2016/09/30/photos-of-antarctica. —*GB*



AS SEEN IN “THE FROZEN BEAUTY OF ANTARCTICA” BY ALASDAIR TURNER ON MASHABLE.COM.

PHOTO BY ALASDAIR TURNER

An advertisement for Patagonia's Houdini Jacket. On the left, a teal-colored jacket is shown from the waist up. To the right of the jacket, the text "It Runs It Rides It Climbs" is written in large, bold, purple letters. Below this text, in smaller purple letters, is "(It Disappears)". Underneath that, in black text, is "Patagonia's Houdini® Jacket". To the right of the text, there is a small, teal-colored pouch with a silver carabiner attached to it. At the bottom right, the Patagonia logo is displayed in black. On the far right edge, there is a vertical copyright notice: "© 2016 Patagonia, Inc."



14	Comments	Elev	Elev	Elev	Dist	Bearing	Units	T
LEY								
HRF11	Vignettes Hut	603290	3160					
HRF1	Col des Vignettes	603150	3160					
HRF2		602670	3160					
HRF3	Base NE Ridge Point M. Gila	603100	3160					
HRF4		602590	3160					
HRF5		602610	3120					
HRF6	Col d l'Eveque	602670	3120					
HRF7	Top brack house	603730	3120					
HRF8	Base NE Ridge La Viange	603790	3120					
HRF9	Col du M Brulé	603030	3270					
HRF10	Base E. Ridge Point de la G. de l'Alpe	604410	3270					
HRF11		603700	3380					
HRF12	Col de Valpelline	603000	3200					
HRF13	Tran R across Stocky	603330	3200					
HRF14		606300	2920					
HRF15		609410	2920					
HRF16		609130	3120					
HRF17		609340	3120					
HRF18		609700	3270					
HRF19	Biel	609470	3130					
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ONLINE GROUPS FOR GUIDE-TO-GUIDE COMMUNICATION

Guide-to-guide communication is critical for us to navigate the quickly evolving environments we work in—not only in the mountains, but also in our profession. Recently, numerous regional guide information exchanges have popped up to help guides share observations, talk about our industry, find jobs, find other guides, and share new techniques and research.

Below is a short list of some of the information exchanges happening around the world. If you know of more groups, please get in touch via one of the exchanges below and let us know about it. We are all looking forward to hearing from you. —Jeff Ward, *American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide*

[AMGA Professional Members Forum \(Facebook\)](#)

[American Mountain Guides in Europe \(Facebook\)](#)

[Sierra Information Exchange \(Facebook\)](#)

[San Juan Information Exchange \(Google\)](#)

[Northwest Guide Information Exchange \(Google\)](#)

CERTIFIED GUIDES COOPERATIVE REACHES MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE

In 2016, membership in the Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC)—which works to support career guides by providing permits and liability insurance—surpassed 100 members, ranging from Single Pitch Instructors to IFMGA certified guides. Having reached this milestone, the CGC is working to expand membership further and offer more benefits, including disability and workers compensation insurance, permit and access consulting, expanded access to public lands in the U.S., and a beta-sharing platform for members. Permitted access continues to be a pressing issue for the guiding industry, and the CGC is on the frontline advocating for guided access, along with the AMGA and other members of the outdoor community. Consider joining the CGC to promote your career as a guide and support the development of our industry. Contact info@cgc.org for more information. —Geoff Unger, *American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide* «

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the highest
commitment
to climbing
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ambassadors
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SALT PUMP CLIMBING GYM, MAINE
PHOTO BY ANNE SKIDMOOR

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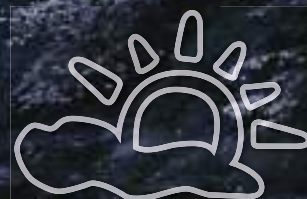


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Measurement Duration



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WELCOME TO “INSIDE AMGA”—A NEW *GUIDE BULLETIN* DEPARTMENT that provides insider updates and tips on how to make the most of your AMGA membership. Read on for insight into where your membership dues go, as well as reminders of just a few of the benefits of being an AMGA member.

ACCESS-ADVOCACY TERRAIN SHIFTS

The contours of our access-advocacy terrain will never look the same. For the first time, the AMGA will launch a robust Access Advocacy program supported by a part-time, experienced public policy advisor and a full-time Advocacy Director. This exciting new chapter is possible thanks to generous support from The North Face (see Director's Corner, page 3). To achieve long-term success in transforming American guiding access, we will also need support from our members, especially in the form of engagement and financial support.

While the AMGA shifted away from access-advocacy work two years ago, several factors currently present what may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand access. These factors include the formation of the Outdoor Access Working Group, public lands planning processes including the Yosemite Wilderness Plan, and bipartisan political support for the outdoor recreation economy and guided access. Also critical is the AMGA Board of Director's decision to pursue a broad access agenda that allows us to closely partner, for the first time, with like-minded organizations. There will be wins and losses ahead; however, there are positive signs for unlocking access. The AMGA must be a voice at the table, or our unique needs (especially low-ratio guiding) will not be addressed.

Roughly one-third of the focus of the Access Advocacy program will be working with our partners on national policy

around guided and instructed access. The other two-thirds of the effort will focus on local issues, especially supporting and training AMGA members on tackling permit- and concession-related issues. The Access Advocacy program will also tackle expanding the AMGA's course venues in the U.S. and developing access opportunities for foreign IFMGA guides. Expect to see updates on the developing Access Advocacy program in upcoming eNewsletters.

AMGA members have shown an increasing interest in having the association engage in advocacy and activism around land protection and conservation issues. Many of these issues have a direct impact on our members' careers. At the same time, there is little consensus among our membership on these contentious issues. The AMGA will work to engage our membership in a discussion on how, and if, we should engage on conservation issues. If we decide to pursue a broad conservation agenda we can begin to explore how to build the political capacity necessary to have an impact in this area.

We see the Access Advocacy program as a powerful new way for your voices, member dues, and contributions to have a direct and significant impact on the future of guiding in America. To get engaged or support this effort, please email me directly: alex@amga.com.

—Alex Kosseff, Executive Director



THE NORTH FACE PARTNERSHIP

The AMGA and The North Face recently teamed up to launch an Access Advocacy program. Thanks to this program, the AMGA will have significant new staff resources to train members on local permit and concession issues—and to help drive favorable policy nationally. Thank you, TNF!

CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAINING LEVELS AWARDED *



IFMGA Guide VIA AMGA — **107**



IFMGA Guide VIA Reciprocal — **18**



AMGA Rock Guide — **260**



AMGA Alpine Guide — **177**



AMGA Ski Guide — **170**



AMGA Single Pitch Instructor — **1,289**



AMGA Climbing Wall Instructor — **758**



AMGA Rock Instructor — **139**

*as of February 2017

ACCESS YOUR PRO DEALS

As an AMGA member, you have access to pro deals* from various partners. Stay up to date with all the best deals you have available by logging in to your MyAMGA account, then click on Pro Purchase Program on the main dashboard. If you have any questions regarding your pro purchase program, please contact: steph@amga.com. —*Steph Marvez, Membership & Social Media Coordinator*

FEATURED PRO DEALS

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*Pro deal information is subject to change as we continually add brands. Access to pro deals varies by certification level and membership type.



FEATURED TECH VIDEO: BELAYED RAPPEL

Spring is coming! Gear up for rock season with a refresher from AMGA Instructor Team member Angela Hawse on how to give a client a belayed rappel. A belayed rappel is an effective way to allow a client to practice rappelling while giving them the added security of a belay from above. To rig a belayed rappel:

1. Tie ropes with a flat overhand knot and thread through the anchor. One rope will serve as the belay rope, while the client rappels down the other rope.
2. Set up your belay: Tie BHK to create a master point. Clip belay device into master point and load belay rope. Redirect break strand.
3. Client loads belay device on the rappel rope. The belay from above eliminates the need for the client to rig a hands-free backup.
4. Loosely belay while client rappels down.

Your AMGA membership gives you access to this video, along with dozens of others featuring tips and techniques from the AMGA Instructor Team. To view all Tech Videos, log in to your MyAMGA account and select Tech Videos from the Members drop-down menu. —*GB*

Visit and log in at amga.com/tech-videos-members/ to watch the entire video, along with 11 others in the series. While you're there, discover dozens more tech videos from the AMGA and Outdoor Research, plus a new series on ice from Petzl and OR. The video archive is one of the most comprehensive and professional rock climbing and skiing resources anywhere—and it's specifically designed for guides.

2016 BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

The 2016 AMGA Board of Directors election featured five candidates competing for three seats. The membership re-elected Silas Rossi, Mike Poborsky, and Jason Martin to the Board for three-year terms.

This year marked the first time the AMGA used an online voting system. Election participation nearly doubled over last year, with 339 out of 1,500 eligible members casting a vote. Please consider voting in next year's election.

At the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in Salt Lake City, the Board re-elected Rob Hess as President, Silas Rossi as Vice President, Margaret Wheeler as Secretary, and Scott Soden as Treasurer. All officers serve one-year terms. —Alex Kosseff, *Executive Director*

SAVE THE DATE: 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2016 Annual Meeting was a success, with over 150 guides in attendance. Stay tuned for more details on the 2017 Annual Meeting, taking place Oct. 26–28. «



OVER 150 AMGA MEMBERS ATTENDED THE AMGA 2016 ANNUAL MEETING, HELD OCT. 27–29, 2016, AT THE PETZL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

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Adam Sanders on Cornucopia, 13a,
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Photo by Jacob Moon, Dinner in the Bugaboos

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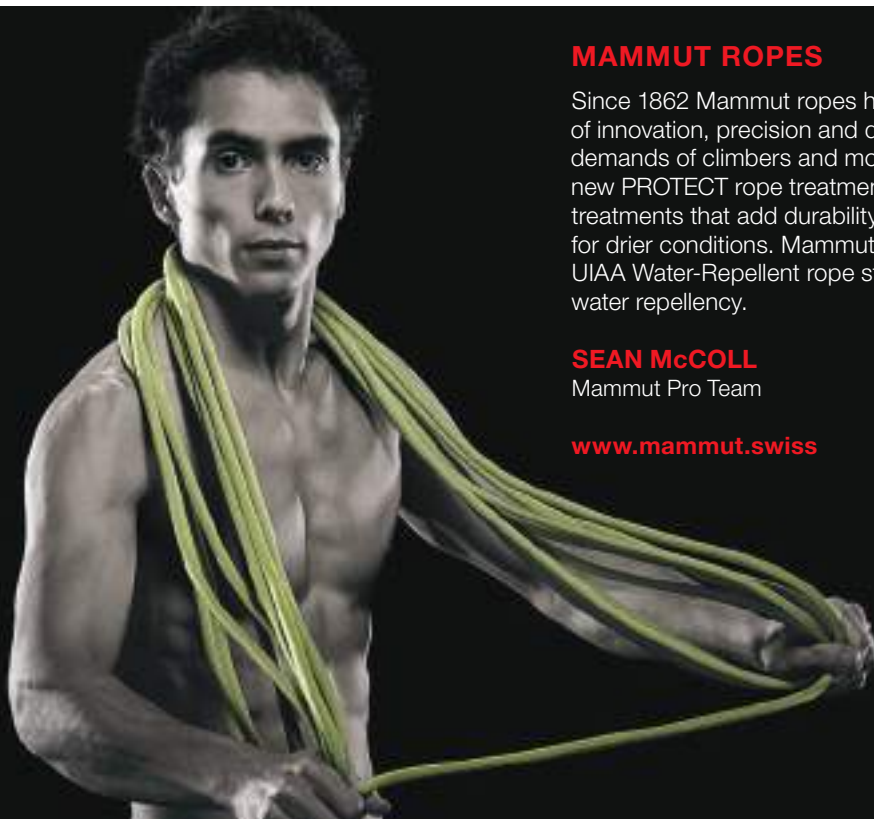


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THE DAY NOTHING HAPPENED

By Doug Robinson

In the late '70s, Wednesdays were Temple Crag day at the Palisades School of Mountaineering (PSOM). Alpine start; tumble out of my home for the summer, a little nook in the glacier-rounded bedrock that dams up Third Lake at 10,200', and down to our backcountry basecamp. We're deep in the wilderness, five miles and over 2,000 feet up from the trailhead, heading for a 13,000' summit. A fire was going, coffee and oatmeal. Four guides and 10 students milled around, stomping in the predawn frost. Daypacks and ropes were laid out the night before. Add a lunch and we're off.

Climbers mostly approach from Second Lake now, missing the logjam we hopped across at the outlet of Third Lake. Same logs year after year, then pop up onto an old moraine. From its top, dawn backlights the Celestial Arêtes. The Sun Ribbon glows along all of its 18 pitches; falling in line behind it are the Moon Goddess and Venusian Blind. Venus was setting behind that one when Don Jensen pulled over this moraine for its FA in 1969, actually onsighting it with two hand-picked students from the PSOM camp, the privilege of a Chief Guide who became the architect that summer of all those arêtes.

The Celestial Arêtes are rugged, inspiring alpine, their blocky dark granite shooting into the sky toward a summit nearly 3,000 feet above us. It amazes me now that we regularly took near-beginners up there for their first multi-pitch climbs before there was an AMGA. Of course a lot of the climbing itself was 5.easy, but still there was all that rope handling to bring two or even three students along behind you.

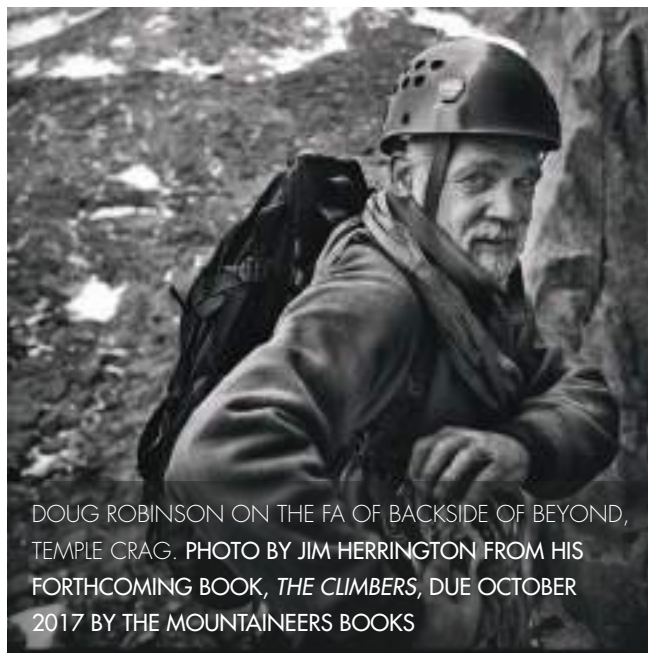
A few times a summer there was a student good enough to take up the Sun Ribbon, and that day I got the luck of the draw. One on one, less rope management and more climbing was the reward. But you had to face the 5.9R crux, crossing a slab high on the ridge, where a fall would send you skittering off the side into talus—definitely an ugly place to contemplate a rescue. Nowadays there's a more secure way around it, capped by a well-protected .10a move. But my favorite part of the climb is below there, where for maybe five pitches the ridge is consistently steep, squared off, and about 15 feet wide, with sharp drop-offs on both sides. There's one spot along that stretch where you're on its right edge and all you can see is a full-reach mantle. No other possible line. Pull it, and another appears. Then another. It's so pure and airy!

It was somewhere in that string of 5.7 pitches that it happened. Or didn't happen. I just lost my balance, teetered backward, and then righted myself. That's all. There was a flash of panic, and I shook it off. It might have been a loose rock, but wasn't. It was just me. Some glitch, somehow, in the well-oiled climbing machine. I still don't know what it was, all these decades later, though the moment itself stands out in stark relief. It wasn't carelessness either, or over-

confidence. I still love—more, really, than any other kind of climbing—that sort of moderate rock, where full focus blends into flowing over the stone.

I led on. Stopped for pro, though, since I had been 80 feet out at the point where things nearly went very badly. My client never knew. I clicked back into gear, nearly instantly humming back to life, and quietly assumed control once more. The rest of the route went smoothly. Joyfully. All that was left was a tale to tell the next time the guides circled up for a safety meeting, and the lingering internal mystery.

Maybe the memory came back because it happened again yesterday. We were at Lover's Leap, on the superb It's Better with Bacon. Thin 5.8 slab. About 20 feet off the third belay, I had just clipped the first bolt and was enjoying the difficulty when my body twitched backward. This time my partner noticed; we talked about it later. Again I didn't fall. It was a small convulsion, like the ones that can wake you from a dream. No loss of confidence, I was soon running it out again with solid moves.



DOUG ROBINSON ON THE FA OF BACKSIDE OF BEYOND, TEMPLE CRAG. PHOTO BY JIM HERRINGTON FROM HIS FORTHCOMING BOOK, *THE CLIMBERS*, DUE OCTOBER 2017 BY THE MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS

The great French guide Lionel Terray, who made the FA of Fitz Roy and was on the first team to come back down successfully from an 8,000-meter peak, was found roped to a client at the base of a lowland wall. John Bachar's last words were "hold broke." There are moments, however rare, when we stare into the black hole of eternity. Plug a piece and move onward. Confidence returns; it's surprising how quickly. We are climbers first, then guides. Soon you are surging upward once more, feeling the sun on your back. «



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