

GUIDE

BULLETIN



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ARNO ILGNER:
MENTAL
BREAKTHROUGHS

REMEMBERING
BELA VADASZ

HAPPY CLIENTS:
9 PRO TIPS

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LIFE, WITH EMILIE
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On the cover: American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Dale Remsberg guides Janet Barnes up the summit ridge of the Matterhorn. Beyond is Monte Rosa (15,203'), Switzerland's highest mountain.
PHOTO BY JOE STOCK,
AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE

This page: Belaying from Skyport Ledge beneath Adams Crack (5.10), Lost Horse Canyon, Bitterroot Mountains, Montana.
PHOTO BY ROBIN CARLETON

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COMMUNICATION. IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR ALL OF YOU TO MASTER WITH your clients or students. I'm committed to ensuring that it's also prioritized within the AMGA. This is your association, and every member should be informed and included on major decisions. As long as I'm leading the team here, you will be.

By the time you read this, the email newsletter will relaunch and Board of Directors minutes for recent years will be easily available on amga.com. Before our 2016 Annual Meeting, and following a frustratingly complex legal review, the latest draft Scope of Practice (the new title for the Terrain and Supervision Guidelines) document will be made available to the AMGA membership for input and debate. And this Fall, we'll implement a brand-new, online election process for the Board of Directors.

Now I'm turning it over to you... What else could the AMGA do to improve communication, engagement, and transparency?

There's a lot the AMGA does well. There's also much more we can do to build a stronger future for American climbing and skiing guides and instructors. As we debate the future and set priorities, one thing we need is a commitment to respect. The AMGA will be at its strongest when every member is comfortable voicing his/her views in AMGA-associated settings. Please hold yourself to a high standard of respect and be brave enough to respectfully call out others if debate gets aggressive, personal, or profane.

The best part of my job is engaging with AMGA members—especially outside the office. It's been a privilege to climb, ski, share beers, and be part of roundtable events with many of you during my nine months as Executive Director. Every discussion I've had has helped shape my vision for how I can help build a better AMGA. I hope to see you in the mountains—but in the meantime, if you have something to discuss, feel free to call or email.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Kosseff".

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

POWERING THROUGH SPICY DUMPLING (5.14D/9A), WHITE MOUNTAIN, YANGSHUO, CHINA.

PHOTO BY JON GLASSBERG

44°66'2" E 273°77'5" N

HAPPY CAMPERS

TIDBITS THAT KEEP CLIENTS COMING BACK

PHOTOS BY DANNY UHLMANN, AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE / IFMGA GUIDE

EVERY GUIDE AND BUSINESS OWNER KNOWS THAT IT'S EASIER TO KEEP A CLIENT THAN TO FIND A new one. As a result, the client experience is of paramount importance and can make or break your career. Within, nine experienced AMGA Certified Guides share their secrets to long-term success.



“First impressions matter. When a new client sends an email query, I get in touch immediately. I’ve found that clients appreciate talking directly with their guide rather than an office manager. Oh, and deodorant. Deodorant helps, too.”

—Rob Coppolillo, *American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

“Beyond keeping clients safe, the most important ingredient is great conversation. I still remember stories from 20 years ago about wide ranging topics like astronomy or parenting or how to run a decent business—and I bet my clients do too.”

—Phil Powers, *AMGA Rock Guide*

“This year, I will celebrate 14 years climbing with my client and friend Richard Mithoff. We’ve built a personal bond based on our love of the mountains, travel, learning about other cultures, good food, and liberal politics. It’s a treat for both of us to spend time together.”

—Christian Santelices, *American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

TOP: IFMGA GUIDES
DYLAN TAYLOR AND CECE
MORTENSON AT 4,100M
BASE CAMP IN THE WAKHAN
RANGE OF AFGHANISTAN’S
PAMIR MOUNTAINS.

FACING: GUIDE AND CLIENTS
ON CHAMONIX’S MOST
FAMOUS ALPINE MODERATE,
L’ARETE DES COSMIQUES.



“Some clients are ‘one-offs,’ simply going for one summit. On those days, I am polite, but I save my energy and stoke for when a client is interested in the broader topic of climbing or skiing. Then I pull out all the stops to let them know that there are many other great objectives out there that I can help them achieve.”

—Mark Smiley, *American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

“Always have a cooler with cold, refreshing beverages waiting back at the car after a long day in the mountains. Not only does it hit the spot, but it also gives me some time to reflect with clients on our day and savor one last mountain moment before heading back to town.”

—Larry Goldie, *American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

“After you’re off the route and sharing a ride to the nearest watering hole, continue to give the client your full attention. I never check my emails or texts while riding with them, even if they do. This is still their time to get feedback and lessons on the day, and it’s your time to discuss the next objective they’d be psyched to climb with you.”

—Pete Lardy, *AMGA Alpine Guide*

“Following up after a trip is one of the best ways to secure return business. I always send my clients a small selection of photos from our time together in order to help them remember the great trip we had. Hopefully the next time I send them a note about a new project I’m thinking would be perfect for them they don’t hesitate to sign up for another great adventure.”

—*Kristoffer Erickson, American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

“Your clients are very smart, and they know that you aren’t *the* best guide in the world—which is okay, because no one is. What matters is that you do the best you can for them every time you go out. Your professionalism and competence will be obvious, and they will certainly be back for other adventures.”

—*Danny Uhlmann, American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*

ACMG/IFMGA GUIDE ERIC OSTOPKEVICH ON M6 SOLAR, SOUTH FACE POINTE LACHENAL, CHAMONIX, FRANCE.



PHOTO BY ANGELA HAWSE,
AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE

“I set long-term goals that lead up to a big objective my clients want to achieve. For big milestones with the right clients I like to link their goal to giving back to a cause that both of us believe in. My clients and I have raised over \$30,000 for the dZi Foundation through these efforts, and they keep coming back for more.”

—*Angela Hawse, American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide*



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A photograph of a man, Bela Vadasz, descending a snowy mountain slope. He is wearing an orange jacket, a blue hood, and sunglasses. He has a backpack and is holding a rope. The background is a snowy mountain range.

THE TORCHBEARER

BELA VADASZ DESCENDING MT. HUNTINGTON IN THE ALASKA RANGE.

PHOTO BY DAVE RIGGS

606546 E 69°3677 N

REMEMBERING THE LEGENDARY LIFE OF BELA VADASZ

By Dave Riggs

IT'S EASY-SKIING ANKLE-DEEP POWDER IN AN Eastern Sierra chute, the first run on a sunny day of an AMGA Ski Guide Course. Instructor Bela Vadasz drops in and makes two conservative turns—stem Christies—and pulls up on high ground facing the candidates watching him. Most of them know some of his skiing accomplishments: first free heel descents of Denali and the V-Notch in the Palisades of the High Sierra, both back in the '80s. Skied from 22,000' on Makalu. Stem Christies?

"Your guests will be nervous and excited," he says. "If they're nervous, you want them thinking, 'OK. I can do that.' If they're good skiers and excited, you want to temper that and show them that there's not just one turn shape and speed in the backcountry. You've got to get them tied into the invisible rope." This was Vadasz in his preferred terrain, in his favorite mountains, doing what he loved and did best: teaching techniques and imparting wisdom for the nuanced challenges of ski guiding.

Bela Vadasz was an American Mountain Guide before

they were called that. He died unexpectedly in September 2015 at the age of 62. Here we remember and share his passion for the mountains, guiding, and the American guiding profession.

Bela was an AMGA stalwart. An early member and advocate when the guiding community was anything but cohesive, he made his mark as the champion of the ski discipline. Bela was a leader in the development of the certification program that gained the AMGA acceptance into the IFMGA in 1997, and he became a fully certified IFMGA Mountain Guide in the process. This successful mission and his continued dedication to the guiding profession earned him the AMGA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. In presenting the award, Rob Hess, then AMGA Technical Director, said, "Bela started the ski program which was the crux of the AMGA being admitted into the IFMGA. Without his vision and perspiration, the AMGA wouldn't be where it is today." As AMGA President, Hess also honored him posthumously with the President's Award in 2015.

For Bela, getting his pin in 1997 below the Grossglockner in the Austrian Alps brought him full circle and was a career highlight. The circle was closed because it was there that a young Vadasz first saw mountain guides in action. Bela escaped the communist takeover

of Hungary with his parents in 1956 and immigrated to the United States, ultimately settling in San Francisco. His mountain-loving parents introduced him to the Sierra Nevada in all seasons at a young age. His father also took him to the Austrian Alps, including a visit to the Grossglockner. Bela remembered the guides bringing their happy, tired, and satisfied clients back to the hut after their days' adventures and wanted to be part of that.

In his foreword to Lou Dawson's *Wild Snow*, the historical guide to North American ski mountaineering, Bela remembered how, as a boy, he kept four books by his bedside: Steve Roper's first edition of *A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, Hervey Voge's *A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*, Alan Blackshaw's *Mountaineering*, and David Brower's *Manual of Ski Mountaineering*. He would read himself to sleep staring at the photos and memorizing the stories of first ascents and descents: "I would begin to dream myself into those pictures and stories, and beyond, into the adventures I hoped I would someday lead."

Getting pinned was a career highlight for more than the obvious reasons. To Bela it meant the world to do so as one of that small first cadre of AMGA guides who went through a program he helped create. In the mid-1980s there was a guide working for Alpine Skills International (ASI), the guide service Bela founded and ran with his wife and partner, Mimi Maki Vadasz, who had gone to Canada and passed the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides' alpine guide exam. Bela was asked why he didn't get certified through the ACMG. He replied that it wasn't so much about getting certified; it was about the professionalism of American guiding and getting the AMGA admitted to the IFMGA.

"[Bela Vadasz] influenced the complete history and direction of mountain guiding in the U.S. No mere words can do proper justice to what Bela meant to both myself personally and everyone who had the pleasure to 'feel' his passion and contagious compassion for the lifestyle and culture we share as the basis for our *raison d'être*. I simply cannot express how monumental Bela's presence literally created opportunities at a time when the profession of mountain guiding in the U.S. was in its most formative stage. Bela's systematic approach offered me such a unique privilege to have this intimate connection and appreciation for details. He was the ultimate perfectionist and all mountain guides are the direct beneficiaries of his 'caretaker' status in respect to setting and maintaining the highest standards both in hard skills and client care. And yet the greatest asset that Bela's spirit offers is his 'visionary' gift that has become a permanent resident within all those who had the pleasure to know him! Bela mastered the art of creativity in a formal progression that he offered with the greatest appreciation for the process as much as the final product."

—Dick Jackson,

American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide

THANK GOD LEDGE, HALF DOME, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

PHOTO BY VADASZ COLLECTION



Bela appreciated, embraced, and advocated for international peer standards, certification, and ski mountaineering guiding at a time when a significant number of American guides did not see the point in any of those. It's a cliché, but Bela was perhaps uniquely qualified to help lead the AMGA's ski discipline program development. In addition to his European heritage and appreciation of European style guiding, Bela was a networker and made European guiding connections early on. In exchange for helping orient Swiss climbers visiting Yosemite Valley in the early '80s, the Swiss invited Bela and Mimi to ski the Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt. This led the pair to guide Americans on the route 21 times over the ensuing years. And those trips led to them meeting, befriending, and sharing ongoing professional collaboration with Anselme Baud, who in addition to being a legendary steep skier, was a guide and instructor at ENSA, the French national school of skiing and alpinism in Chamonix.

All this Europhilia Bela balanced with American individualism and entrepreneurial sensibilities. He and Mimi had degrees in Outdoor Ed and led college outing trips as their entry into guiding. They understood the American do-it-yourself mentality and founded their guide service with skills improvement at its core. Their focus on skiing led them to be certified through the Professional Ski Instructors of America, and they carried the learner-centered, skills progression approach of the PSIA over to climbing and



VADASZ WITH SONS LOGAN (LEFT) AND TOBIN (RIGHT) IN SWITZERLAND.

PHOTO BY MIMI MAKI VADASZ

mountaineering.

Like any successful leader, Bela was a passionate and talented communicator who attracted followers. He also had an ego and enjoyed being out front and having the attention of others. He had strong opinions, and not all of his peers always agreed. The AMGA notes in its history that there was “an initial hiccup with a ‘too many cooks’ ski seminar in the Sierra in the spring of 1993, [but] the ski folks soon worked out issues stemming from the wide range of perspectives born in each of the various snowpack and mountain environments of the western United States.” Bela was one of the cooks, probably wanting to be the chef. But he learned to be open, find common ground, and in some cases just respectfully

agree to disagree. A testament was the subsequent founding and development of the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) to unify the avalanche safety standards for the AMGA ski discipline.

As a strong leader Bela also could be very demanding on guides he was training and even some of his guests. In remembering Bela from his ski guide courses and exam, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Rob Coppolillo said, “RIP, older brother... you were a damned pain-in-the-ass on my first AMGA course... but I came out a better guide because of it... and we had a laugh about it later. You made many of us better guides.”

He guided classic routes and peaks on five continents, but long ridge and ski traverses in his beloved Sierra Nevada remained his favorites. During the 1980s telemark boom, ASI guided what they called the Sierra Crest Tour, from Mt. Whitney to Tuolumne Meadows, well above the John Muir Trail, in four six-day segments, with many guests returning year after year to complete the entire traverse. In the 1990s, Bela led three friends on summer attempts of complete traverses of the Palisade and Ritter ranges. He told his friends, “You’re too good, and I’m relying on you too much to be ‘guiding.’ I’m just ‘mentoring.’”

Just as important to Bela was that his guests become lovers of mountains and learn to carry the inspiration and lessons from the hills into the rest of their lives. He was known for his corny, but heartfelt, catch phrases like “magic mountain pace.”

But the phrase that best captures the guide and the man is: “Find the spirit of the alpinist. Then let the spirit set you free.” «

Photo: Stefan Schlumpf



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ESPRESSO BREAKTHROUGHS



3 MENTAL PROGRESSION CASE STUDIES

Story and photos by Arno Ilgner, AMGA SPI

AS OUTDOOR EDUCATORS AND PROS—guides, instructors, and coaches—we have a unique opportunity to impact our clients beyond what they expect to learn. They may want to climb harder grades, learn how to lead, or how to face their fears. Or, they may want to experience achieving a goal or beautiful summit. Whatever their motivation, as instructors, we should keep in mind that these are the ends and not the means.

How many times have we heard clients say they love climbing? Isn't that the best motivation? Loving climbing means they actually want to engage—and engagement is the key to a fun and rewarding experience. If we introduce processes that heighten a love for climbing, our clients will enjoy a deeper satisfaction, whether or not they reach the summit.

As instructors, we tend to know more than the clients themselves about what it is they need to learn. We know there's more to climbing harder grades or overcoming fears than physical training or tricks and techniques. We've spent years analyzing our climbing and others we've taught, which has led us to understand more foundational processes that can help. We need to teach them what *we* know they need to learn. This lets them learn what they came for, just not in the expected way.

Our goal is to face and address the mental challenges

of guiding or instructing clients—to find the best ways to create productive learning environments. Such training can also bridge beyond climbing. Wouldn't it be nice if clients learned lessons in the mountains that they could apply to general life? That's a bonus that reminds them of the great experience they had and how cool climbing really is—the kind of experience that creates returning clients.

Despite our deep knowledge, developing lessons to help clients overcome mental blocks in a fun and rewarding environment is often one of our greatest challenges. I've chosen three case studies that highlight the trials in creating such a teaching environment. The first one addresses clients who get frustrated; the second addresses clients who feel stuck; and the

BEN LITZ IN THE ZONE ON SHOSHONE SPIRE, BITTERROOT MOUNTAINS, MONTANA.

PHOTO BY ROBIN CARLETON

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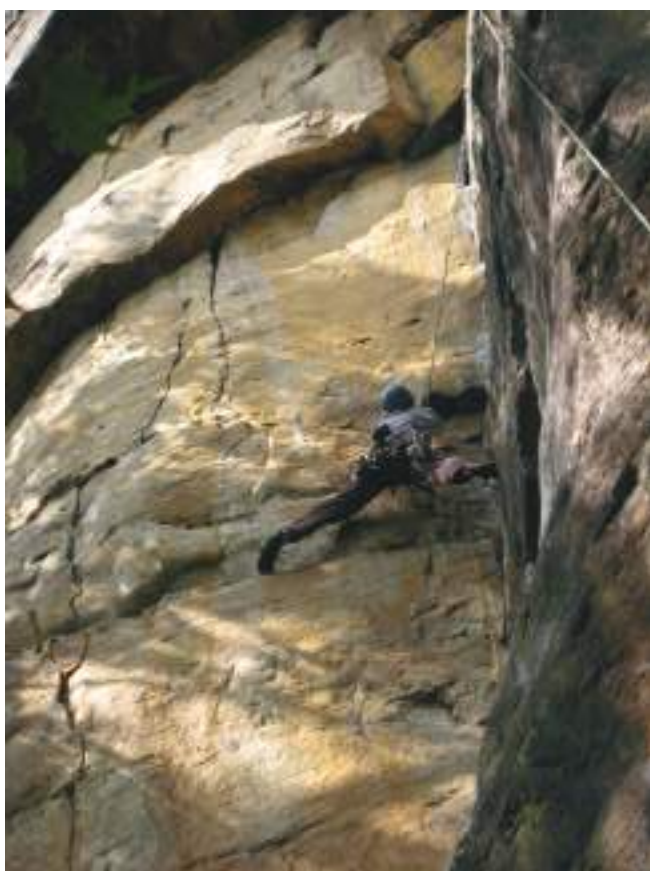
Clients just want to have fun. They want to feel like they are making progress.

third addresses clients who misperceive their actual level of knowledge. These are three areas that are particularly tough for guides/instructors because they often lead to clients shutting down, halting their engagement. Finding ways to get them going again is critically important.

Clients just want to have fun. They want to feel like they are making progress. We can help them with these goals by identifying and exposing limitations, then creating lessons with small-engagement increments that give clients the ability to see growth and therefore build confidence.

1. CLIENT FRUSTRATION **ELAINA ARENZ, AMGA ROCK GUIDE &** **JEFF HEARN, AMGA SPI**

In 2015, Elaina and Jeff, of New River Mountain Guides, scheduled a trad camp at the New River Gorge, which included learning to fall on self-placed gear. They had one student (we'll call her Jill) who was very resistant to the



falling exercises and required heavy coaching. Initially, Jill was full of excuses and unwilling to engage in the practice. She was timid, and very rigid in her body positioning. They started Jill with top rope falls of about one meter. Knowing how to engage your body is important. They instructed Jill to

exhale throughout the fall, look down, and assume a relaxed “falling posture” with arms/legs shoulder-width apart and bent. Focusing her attention on these elements helps develop comfort with falling and effective ways to respond to falls. Eventually, Jill took some one-meter top rope falls onto a perfectly placed No. 1 Camalot. By the end of her practice, she was able to do the exercise and had become visibly more comfortable.

On debrief, though, she downplayed her progress, saying things like, “Well, if it was an Alien there’s no way I would have taken the fall.” Or: “I wouldn’t have taken the fall if it was a pendulum.” She clearly wasn’t ready for either of those situations. She cried and stated she hated trad climbing and that breathing had no effect.

On day two, they ran her through falling drills again, and she was more willing to engage, showing progress more quickly, and without tears. She progressed to the point of taking longer top rope falls of about three meters, but couldn’t progress to lead falls. The learning process was clearly slower for her than she would have liked, which frustrated her. The breathing, looking down, and being aware of her body position really helped her, though.

In order to help Jill, four things need to happen:

1. Understand why Jill was frustrated. She wasn’t progressing as quickly as she wanted.
2. Determine what mental realignment is needed. Jill needed to understand that progress is slow when dealing with fears, and that she won’t simply overcome them in a day or two.
3. Determine the right mental tools for Jill. She needed to be curious about what her fear had to teach her—to move into it instead of running away from it.
4. Elaina and Jeff needed to give Jill specific actions she could take to engage her fear. They coached Jill to breathe, assume proper falling posture, and look down to face her fear during the fall.

Jill, like many of our clients, is motivated to overcome her fears. This points toward a desire to achieve an end result—more natural, relaxed lead climbing. However, we hinder progress if we equate how we feel about ourselves with the outcomes we create. Jill was faced with a desire to overcome fear of falling and felt frustrated about her inability to become fearless quickly. It’s difficult for instructors to help clients separate their identity from their performance. In fact, that’s not our job—we aren’t trained therapists. All we can do is find ways to keep clients engaged and shift their attention away from the area of frustration, and toward possible solutions.

This is precisely what Elaina and Jeff did. They structured the drill so the length of the fall would be a small amount of stress—just enough so Jill could engage it, gradually



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increasing it in small increments. Then, they had her focus her attention in her body during the fall itself. During debriefs, Elaina and Jeff continually asked questions about what Jill had experienced during each fall. These were “process questions,” not questions about achievement, and took Jill’s focus off her disappointment about not making quick progress. This method helped Jill to love climbing for the struggle it offers, and by the second day she was more comfortable taking longer falls. Jeff and Elaina also gave Jill a tangible and incremental process to continue to practice herself, surely leading to further progress and an ongoing engagement with rock climbing.



While Sara hung, she and Jes discussed factors in the situation that Sara could control, such as her movement, her breathing, and staying relaxed.



2. STUCK CLIENT

JES MEIRIS, AMGA ASSISTANT ROCK GUIDE

Jes teaches in a wide variety of situations. She coaches a climbing team in her home base of Colorado Springs, Colorado, as well as guides, teaching groups and individual clients in outdoor settings. She was working with a woman (we’ll call her Sara) at a local sport-climbing crag near the Springs.

Their objectives for the day were for Sara to become a more proficient lead climber, learn about anchor mechanics, learn to safely clean an anchor and rappel, and learn to fall properly. That’s a lot of ground to cover. Jes suspected that most of Sara’s issues would be mental and not physical, and revolve around lead climbing. Sara was fit, climbed 5.10+ consistently in the gym, and had some lead experience already.

They moved through their objectives, including some basic falling drills. Toward the end of the day, Jes felt that Sara was capable of leading an easy route safely. They roped up for a 5.5 single-pitch lead. Sara became scared low on the climb and was hesitant to make moves too far above the first bolt and face a near-groundfall. Understandable. So Jes pre-clipped the second bolt for her. Sara climbed quickly and easily past the initial scary moves and to the second bolt, but then her fear returned as soon as she began climbing past it.

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Sara was at a comfortable stance, so Jes coached her about distinguishing between perceived risk and actual risk. In her mind, Sara had convinced herself that she was going to die on this 5.5. In reality, she was more than capable of doing the moves physically, and so her actual risk of physical harm was extremely low. Sara engaged again after their brief discussion. She started to climb, but again her worries took over, and she backed down. Jes had Sara rest on the rope, to let her mind and body settle. While Sara hung, she and Jes discussed factors in the situation that Sara could control, such as her movement, her breathing, and staying relaxed.

In the end, Sara chose to back off. Jes was concerned that pushing Sara to continue on lead would result in overwhelming her, causing her to tense up and potentially hurt herself. Jes finished the route, and they practiced cleaning the anchor and rappelling.

Four things need to happen here:

1. Understand why Sara was stuck. The stress of lead climbing was too great. This caused Sara to think in all-or-nothing ways: “If I can’t do it all, then I’ll do nothing.”
2. Determine what mental realignment is needed. Learning occurs in small steps.
3. Determine which mental tools are needed. Sara needed to find little ways to engage the situation.
4. Sara needed tangible actions to take, in small steps.

Jes did great in all of these areas except the final one, a common mistake among instructors. When a client is stuck, we need to find a stress increment small enough to allow engagement. Certainly Jes *began* this process by clipping the second bolt, but she needed to take it further, perhaps hanging extended slings between bolts to create shorter fall consequences or setting up a semi-slack back-up top rope that would still allow Sara to engage on lead.

Jes helped Sara understand the difference between perceived and actual risk: what she could control and what she couldn’t. Doing this helped Sara shift her attention and build intellectual knowledge. Next, Sara needed to demonstrate this knowledge by engaging the climb. By experiencing the difference between perceived and actual risk—focusing on what she could control—Sara left with an experience she could build on later. Sara learned the other objectives of the day, made some progress with lead climbing, and left satisfied with the experience.



14	Comments	Start	End	Elev	Dist	Surf	Slope	Units	T
LEY									
HRF11	Vignettes Hut	602 1200	3160						
HRF1	Col des Vignettes	602 1300	3160						
HRF2		602 1400	3160						
HRF3	Base NE Ridge Pointe de la Croix	602 1500	3120						
HRF4		602 1600	3120						
HRF5	Col d' l' Eveque	602 1700	3270						
HRF6	Top break down	602 1800	3380						
HRF7	Base NE Ridge La Vierge	602 1900	3200						
HRF8		602 2000	2920						
HRF9	Col du M Brule	602 2100	3120						
HRF10	Base E. Ridge Pointe de la Croix	602 2200	3230						
HRF11		602 2300	3120						
HRF12	Col de Valpelline	602 2400	3160						
HRF13	Trans R across Strack	602 2500	3555						
HRF14		602 2600	3200						
HRF15		602 2700	3000						
RF16		602 2800	2940						
RF17		602 2900	2640						
RF18		602 3000	2700						
RF19	Biel	602 3100	2090						
RF20	Furi	602 3200	2670						

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3. CLIENT MISPERCEPTION OF ABILITIES

JEFF LODAS, AMGA SPI

Jeff Lodas has his own guiding company (Lodas LLC) in California, teaching indoor and outdoor clinics, primarily designed to help clients with mental training. He's especially practiced in how clients can misperceive their own skill level, thinking they know more or less than they actually do. Either scenario leads to misperceiving risk, keeping us from engaging in appropriate endeavors or disengaging from inappropriate ones.

Jeff taught a mental-training clinic at the gym Planet Granite in the California Bay Area earlier this year. To open, he determined how much falling experience students had. Experienced climbers (5.11–5.12) have usually taken some falls over the course of their careers. Even climbers of this grade, however, resist falling and haven't taken many falls. These falls generally establish poor falling technique. He had one student (we'll call him Bill) who climbed 5.11 and had taken a few falls. At the outset, Bill said he wasn't afraid of falling, but in reality he reacted fearfully, grabbing the rope, holding his breath, and tensing up. Jeff needed to meet Bill where he actually was with his falling experience, not where he said he was. Bill basically needed to start all over again, with short top rope falls, and work up slowly from there; his old, limiting habits needed to be rewritten. Jeff coached Bill to breathe throughout the fall, look down into the fall zone, and assume proper falling posture so he remained relaxed. When Bill finally did the falls correctly, he experienced how much easier and safer it could be.

Jeff also had a novice climber (we'll call him Fred) who climbed 5.10 and had no falling experience. Fred was challenged to take falls, but in a different



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way: Unlike Bill, he felt there was no way he could take a lead fall. So Jeff set up incremental falling exercises, starting with short top rope falls then building up to longer top rope falls and finally to lead falls, that allowed Fred to begin processing his misperception. Since he had no falling experience, there were no limiting habits ingrained yet, and within just a few repetitions, Fred had already begun to ingrain effective falling habits and had found that his fears were groundless.

Four things need to happen here:

1. Understand why clients misperceive what they know. They lack experience or have experiences that aren't true representations of effective, safe climbing skills.
2. Determine what mental realignment is needed. Their *knowing* needs to be based on accurate experiential knowledge. Bill had experience, but that experience interfered with learning how to fall correctly.
3. Determine which mental tools are needed. Jeff needed to get Bill's commitment to engage the incremental falling drills even if he thought it was silly to begin with short top rope falls. Meanwhile, Fred didn't have experience, so he simply needed to understand that Jeff would teach him in a slow, incremental way.
4. Help clients understand which actions to take during drills. They needed to stop thinking and observe their breathing and how they engaged their bodies. This was easier for Fred, as he had no preconceptions or ingrained limiting habits. Bill needed more work to unlearn his old habits, and relearn the new process.

G3



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Both the experienced and novice climber alike had misperceived what they knew. Bill knew less than he thought he did while Fred knew more than he thought he did. As instructors, we need to be especially aware of the former scenario, as it's all too common for limiting habits to take root in semi-experienced climbers.



We've focused on instruction in these case studies, but these mental challenges also occur when guiding. Clients may get frustrated because they're moving too slowly and won't achieve the objective by the end of the day. Guides need to shift clients' attention to enjoying and valuing the climbing challenge. Then, outline steps they can take to meet their objective next time. Or, clients may be stuck, not being able to make a move to continue. They get discouraged thinking about all the effort that still needs to be achieved by the end of the day. Guides need to find little ways clients can engage the rock that is right in front of them. Taking a step up to test various options can get them moving again. And, of course, life lessons are a bonus. Wouldn't it be nice if clients were less frustrated or didn't feel stuck in their lives? Enjoying the challenges life offers and finding little ways to engage them gets life moving forward.

Wouldn't it be nice if clients were less frustrated or didn't feel stuck in their lives?

Enjoying the challenges life offers and finding little ways to engage them gets life moving forward.

By determining small-engagement increments, emphasizing what to focus on, and giving them tangible tools to take action, we shift their experience to the process of climbing, and away from simply achievement. We realign their motivation and how they approach challenges. Doing this makes our clients more effective in learning skills, allows them to make progress, and sends them home having had a fun and engaging experience. They learn what they need to learn, just not in the way they expected to learn it. «



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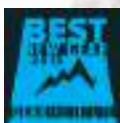


DYNAFIT

Athlete: Eric Poore Photo: Fred Marmasater

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*By Olivia Race,
American Mountain
Guide / IFMGA Guide*

*By Olivia Race,
American Mountain
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WHEN GUIDING IN TECHNICAL TERRAIN, PROFESSIONALS RELY ON EQUIPMENT TO KEEP everyone safe and happy. What you pack—or forget to pack—can make or break a client's experience. If you're reading this, you may have years or even decades of experience preparing for a day of rock guiding. That experience is always going to be your best guide. But experience also can blind. An investigation of your packing habits may help you refine your gear selection. And perhaps a bit of creativity each time you leave the house will make for the most memorable part of the climb.

LET'S START WITH THE BASICS.

1. **Consider your objective.** What's the length of the approach and exit? An all-day route with a long approach and craggy overhang will clearly require much more selectivity than a day of roadside cragging. A day at Indian Creek requires a very different rack than a day at the Gunks.
2. **Consider your clients.** What's the fitness and experience level of your group? Envision what gear would be required in a worst-case scenario and (literally and metaphorically) weigh what to bring.
3. **Consider weight.** Bulkier gear (i.e. nylon) tends to be more durable with fewer performance limitations. Lighter-weight gear is often less durable and not ideal for some applications. Keeping this in mind allows me to maximize the performance and life expectancy of my equipment (and my back). Remember that your client may be unable or unwilling to carry group gear.
4. **Consider the experience.** In the end, guiding comes down to two things: safety and fun. Consider what little things won't add much weight but will add to the comfort or experience for your clients. For example, a unique snack, or a camera to take photos that can be shared after the climb.

With these basics in mind, there are a few categories that help me simplify the packing process in the late evening hours (after the kids are finally in bed):

RACK

- › Single set stoppers (split between two biners)
- › Double set small cams (Metolius Ultralight Master Cams 0-2)
- › Double set larger cams (Black Diamond Camalots .4-3)
- › Each cam racked independently on a lightweight wire-gate biner
- › Trad Anchors necessitate more gear; bolted anchors allow for a lighter rack

QUICKDRAWS & SLINGS

Might be all one type or a combination depending on the route(s):

- › 10–14 Quickdraws or
- › 10–12 Alpine draws (nylon 60cm/24" runner + 2 non-locking biners) or
- › 10–12 Lightweight slings (Dyneema 60cm/24") with single wire-gate biner

ANCHOR MATERIAL & MISCELLANEOUS

The load transfer (or rock rescue) drill gives a good baseline for the minimum amount of gear you might want in case of an accident. This is also a convenient way of sorting out what type of, and how much, anchor material you might need for the day.

- › 2 Cordelettes: 18' of 7mm Nylon cord
- › 2 Double-length slings: 120cm/48" nylon for cragging; Dyneema

- for longer routes
- › 5–6 Locking carabiners: round stock, key lock biners (i.e. Petzl Attache)
- › 4–6 Free non-locking carabiners
- › 6.8mm Sterling Hollowblock 13.5" Loop (for rappel back-ups)
- › Nut Tool
- › Self-braking belay device (plaquette style: Petzl Reverso 4 or Kong Gigi)
- › Belay Gloves
- › Knife

ROPE

A fatter rope will stretch less, be more durable, and make it easier for a client to catch a fall. A skinnier rope will be nicer to carry on long approaches and easier to pull through your device, saving shoulders and elbows. Check the descent and consider a tag line or twin ropes. A rope bag will prolong the life of your rope and is worth including on cragging days.

FIRST AID KIT

- › Easily accessible kit for lid of pack to address life threats:
 - › Face shield
 - › Gloves

- › Pressure dressing (4x4 gauze pad, 3' roller gauze + 4' ace wrap)
- › Remainder of kit (meds and minor dressings) can be deeper in pack

BASICS

- › Helmet, harness, rock shoes & chalk bag
- › Food and water
- › Sunscreen and lip balm
- › Sun shirt and necessary layers
- › Hat (sun and/or ski) and/or Buff
- › Sunglasses
- › Guidebook/topo/map
- › Small headlamp (i.e. Petzl Zipka)
- › Lighter
- › Phone (with extra battery pack, such as Mophie Juice Pack)

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- › Assisted Braking Belay device (Petzl Grigri 2)
- › Bullet Pack for longer multi-pitch routes
- › Petzl Micro Traxion on locking "leaver biner"
- › MSR Dromedary Bag for water (especially nice now that "auto-blocking" devices are not hands free) «

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Photographer: Sandra Salvas

SCOPE OF PRACTICE UPDATE

A Makeover for the Terrain and Supervision Guidelines

Following a task force meeting in Jackson, Wyoming, in May 2015, the AMGA Board of Directors began the process of adopting a new Scope of Practice (SOP) document to replace the previous Terrain and Supervision Guidelines. The effort aims to professionalize American guiding and instruction by defining the terrain in which AMGA members at various levels of training may work.

Revision of the guidelines has included an exhaustive legal review. Jim Pearson, attorney and former Board member, has recently assumed the role of AMGA's legal advisor for this effort. This legal advice has resulted in some changes in the document; however, the Board remains committed to full SOP implementation by 2022.

At a May 2016 meeting, the Board agreed that obtaining input from the AMGA membership on a new draft of the SOP will be a crucial next step. While legal concerns have previously limited the AMGA's ability to share recent work on the SOP, the Board is excited to re-engage the membership on this initiative. Members can look forward to a new draft of the SOP before the 2016 Annual Meeting. —*Alex Kosseff, Executive Director*

CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The AMGA offers invitation-only Single Pitch Instructor and Climbing Wall Instructor Provider Trainings for those interested in offering either program. Admission to the trainings requires an application. Applicants should have extensive guiding experience and a commitment to the mission of the AMGA.

This fall, an SPI Provider Training will be offered from Oct. 31–Nov. 1 in Salt Lake City, immediately following the AMGA Annual Meeting. A CWI Provider Training is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 7–8 in Minneapolis as a pre-conference workshop before the annual meeting of the Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education.

Current SPI Providers and Assistant Providers can meet their continuing education requirement, network with other Providers, and share ideas about the program at this year's SPI Refresher, offered Oct. 26 in Salt Lake City. For more information, email ed@amga.com or call (303) 327-9479.

—*Ed Crothers, Climbing Instructor Program Director*

CONGRATULATIONS NEW IFMGA GUIDES!

The following guides earned American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Certification between Jan. 1 and June 1, 2016:

Michael Abbey	Brian Smith
Gabriel Coler	Mark Synnott
Tico Gangulee	Jeff Witt
Paul Rauchelle	Daniel Zokaite
Alan Rousseau	

SPLITBOARDS IN THE SKI GUIDE PROGRAM

The AMGA has been accepting splitboarders to the Ski Guide training and examination programs since 2014. Last winter, four riders received their AMGA Ski Guide Certification: Victor McNeil, Jamie Weeks, Julian Hanna, and Matthew Primomo (Primomo was also assessed and passed on the ski standard).

Riders interested in obtaining AMGA Certification

JOIN US FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL MEETING!

We are excited to announce that the 2016 AMGA Annual Meeting will take place at the Petzl Technical Institute in Salt Lake City, from October 27–29. The AMGA Board of Directors Meeting will follow on October 30th. This year's meeting will include an expanded array of clinics spanning three full days. Registration opens August 15th at amga.com. See you there!



GUIDES GATHER AT THE PETZL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FOR THE 2015 ANNUAL MEETING.

PHOTO BY KARSTEN DELAP, AMGA ROCK INSTRUCTOR, ROCK GUIDE, ALPINE GUIDE, SPI



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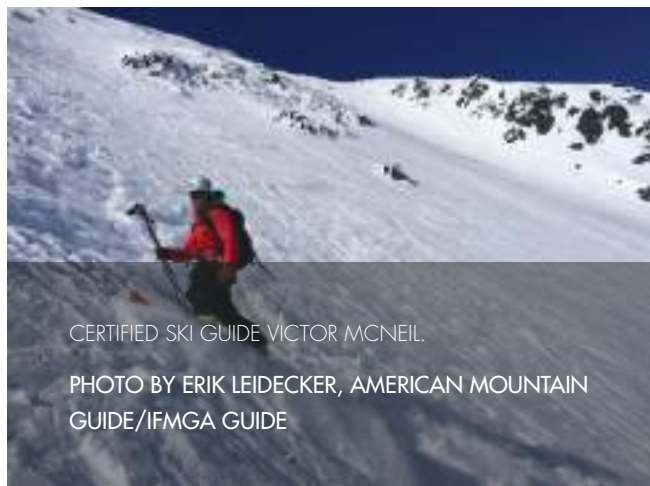


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should keep the following in mind:

- › Skins must be used for travel requiring the use of a splitboard
- › Full AMGA/IFMGA certification still requires the guide to meet the ski standard



CERTIFIED SKI GUIDE VICTOR MCNEIL

PHOTO BY ERIK LEIDECKER, AMERICAN MOUNTAIN
GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE

Introducing a splitboard option to AMGA Programs enhances the educational experience for all participants, as splitboard guides can provide feedback for Ski Guides not familiar with guiding riders and vice-versa. Splitboards on AMGA Programs serve as an important reminder that clients show up with a variety of different skill sets, levels of fitness, and equipment that all guides need to take into consideration.

—Erik Leidecker, American Mountain Guide / IFMGA Guide

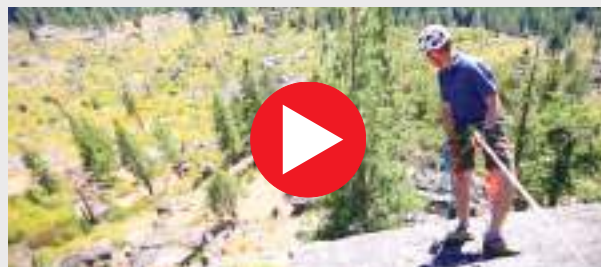
WORKING TOWARD INCREASED GENDER DIVERSITY

At this year's annual meeting, Erica Engle (AMGA Ski Guide) and Derek DeBruin (AMGA Rock Guide, Rock Instructor, SPI) hosted two forums focused on gender inclusion in the AMGA and the guiding industry at large. Separated by gender, the forums were based off qualitative, anecdotal data gathered through interviews with 15 female AMGA members. Each group worked to brainstorm ways that the AMGA can serve as a leader of gender inclusion in the guiding industry and identify potential strategies to create a more inclusive environment that will benefit all members.

Erica and Derek presented the results of these discussions to the Board of Directors at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. The Board voted to create a new ad-hoc committee to address inclusion and named Erica and Derek co-chairs.

Since its formation, the committee has made progress on a few initiatives. At its May 2016 meeting, the Board of Directors ratified a revision to the Code of Ethics that now calls on AMGA members to be "culturally competent" professionals who treat all clients, fellow guides, and the public with respect. The committee also has drafted documents to guide the Technical Director in training the Instructor Team to provide programs that have more open, inclusive, and growth-oriented learning environments.

The committee also has submitted a proposal for a



SUMMER REFRESHER

RAPPELLING: THROWING ROPES

In an AMGA Climbing Fundamentals video, produced in partnership with Outdoor Research, AMGA Instructor Team Member Jeff Ward offers three techniques for rope management on rappel:

TORPEDO

Make a small coil on one end of the rope and wrap around the coil. Throwing the coil will help you avoid getting caught on ledges without requiring you to toss the entire rope.

MIDDLE FIRST

Coil most of the rope from one end, stopping several meters shy of the middle. Toss the middle first, then the coil, to allow for a cleaner throw.

SADDLE BAGS

On a windy day, slide a small amount of rope down the cliff, then create two coils and attach each to either side of your harness. Feed out rope as you rappel to avoid tangling.

Visit amga.com/tag/climbing-fundamentals-video-series 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. The video archive is one of the most comprehensive and professional rock climbing and skiing resources anywhere—and it's specifically designed for guides. Coming soon: a new series on ice from Petzl and OR.

formal mentoring program. This program would give underrepresented AMGA members the opportunity to build relationships with other members of similar backgrounds.

To provide suggestions or other feedback to the Inclusion Committee, please email dmdebruin@gmail.com or ericaengle@mac.com. —Erica Engle (AMGA Ski Guide) and Derek DeBruin (AMGA Rock Guide, Rock Instructor, SPI)

DOUG WALKER'S OUTDOOR ACCESS WORKING GROUP LEGACY

A coalition of outdoor organizations including the AMGA, the Outdoor Access Working Group (OAWG) works to secure access to public lands for guiding, outdoor education, and



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other organized activities. The AMGA's participation in the coalition is crucial, given its beliefs that guided access is public access and guiding can help minimize impact and improve education for visitors to public lands.

Last December, Doug Walker, who laid much of the foundation for the OAWG, died in an avalanche. A successful software entrepreneur, former Board Chairman for REI and The Wilderness Society, and President of the American Alpine Club Board of Directors at the time of his death, Walker was a major supporter of the AMGA. Walker saw the severe limitations on access for guided and organized groups as limiting the size and diversity of the conservation constituency.

AMGA Board member and OAWG Steering Committee member Dan Nordstrom remembers Walker's commitment to access advocacy: "No one in the U.S. has done more to improve the access picture than Doug Walker. He was tireless in creating pressure among land managers and D.C. bureaucrats.... Doug was passionate that getting more people outdoors on real adventures was important for improving their lives and he knew that guides have a major role to play in making that a reality. Nearly everyone involved in the access reform movement was energized at some point by Doug. We owe his memory an enormous debt of gratitude."

The OAWG has prompted the leadership of the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to acknowledge, for the first time, the existence of an access problem. This has led to some remarkable successes so far in 2016. At the American Alpine Club Annual Dinner, the Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, announced a permit nicknamed the "Walker Permit." Her order facilitates access for youth programs on Park Service, BLM, and other lands.

On June 17, the Secretary of Agriculture and U.S.

Forest Service announced streamlined access to special use permitting, including permits for guides, guide services, and other recreation providers. How this new approach is implemented on the local level will determine how much real value there is for AMGA members. With over half of the Forest Service's budget going to wildfires, there is little left for permitting and other tasks. Ultimately, lasting national change may require additional funding for relevant agencies and legislation such as the Recreation Not Red-Tape Act, drafted by Oregon Senator Ron Wyden with the support of the OAWG. —*Alex Kosseff, Executive Director*

MEET THE STAFF

We are happy to introduce our four newest staff members:

Alex Kosseff, Executive Director

Alex took over as Executive Director in fall 2015. Learn a bit about Alex and his work in this issue's Director's Corner, on page 3.

Steph Marvez, Membership and Social Media Coordinator

An avid climber with a background in the outdoor industry, Steph manages all aspects of membership and our social media presence. She also coordinates our scholarship and pro purchase programs.

Peter Schultz, Guide Program Coordinator

The primary assistant to the Guide Program Manager and Technical Director of the Mountain Guide Program, Peter serves as the main contact for students and instructors with needs relating to enrollment, logistics, course materials, and course feedback.

Loki, Office Dog

A tennis ball fanatic and part of a package deal with Peter, Loki oversees office diversion. Although he has little climbing experience, Loki is a snowsports enthusiast.

AAC BOLSTERS EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

AMGA Board member, Single Pitch Discipline Coordinator, and Rock Guide Ron Funderburke has begun work as the American Alpine Club's Education Manager. Ron will lead the Club's educational initiatives, beginning with the Universal Belay Standard. The AAC also has reinvested in its commitment to guided access advocacy with the hiring of Conservation and Advocacy Director Maria Millard. The AMGA looks forward to finding ways to collaborate with the AAC on issues of both education and access. —*Alex Kosseff, Executive Director*

AVALANCHE EDUCATION GOES PRO

The American Avalanche Association—in conjunction with the American Avalanche Institute, the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education, and other avalanche educators—has begun work to split avalanche education into a professional track and a recreational track. The split is slated to take effect during the 2017–18 season.

COMING SOON: NEW AMGA DIGS



In early August, the AMGA will relocate to:

4720 Walnut Street
Suite 200
Boulder, CO 80301

We will continue to share our space with the Access Fund. We look forward to an enhanced work environment and an expanded teaching and meeting space.



Anyone interested in avalanche education will start off with a Level 1 course. In addition to this course, a one-day Rescue Fundamentals course will be required to enter either the professional stream or the advanced recreational course. The professional track will comprise two courses (Pro 1 and Pro 2) and will require an application and qualifying prerequisites.

If you plan to take avalanche courses this winter, bear the following in mind:

- › Current Level 2 will continue to be valid, but you will need to take a bridge course to demonstrate your skills and be tested
- › Current Level 3 certifications will be comparable to Pro 2, the highest level of training in the U.S. going forward

A tremendous amount of work has been put into the restructuring, and more work remains. Please contact the AAA with questions. —Dale Remsberg, Technical Director

CERTIFIED GUIDES COOPERATIVE UPDATE

The Certified Guides Cooperative (CGC) was founded in 2010 to help guides make a living in our chosen profession. Since then, we have grown to 88 members and built upon our mission by working with the AMGA to advocate for guide training and certification. The CGC currently holds permits around the country and provides liability insurance for guides both domestically and abroad.

This March, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide Geoff Unger began as Operations Manager to help coordinate membership and permits. Geoff was a founding member of the CGC and served as Board President prior to accepting his position. This part-time position is critical to the development of the organization.

We look forward to our continued growth and hope to reach 100 members by the end of 2016. For more information on the benefits of CGC membership, including assistance finding shoulder-season work, tips on building your business, access to life and accident insurance, and more, visit cgcoop.org or email info@cgcoop.org. —Geoff Unger, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide «





Photo by Jacob Moon, Dinner in the Bugaboos

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GREG THOMSEN, **ADIDAS OUTDOOR**

Most of the Adidas Outdoor staff grew up in the climbing life. Back in the 1970s, we mostly learned to climb through personal mentorship, outdoor groups, and a few small guide services in national parks. When the popularity of adventure sports exploded in the '80s, thousands of people sought out instruction. Outdoor clubs and scouting troops could no longer handle the demand, and climbing accidents spiked. The amateur approach to learning how to climb, long based on mentoring from peers and peer groups, was no longer viable. There simply were not enough peers. So private guide services emerged to fill the growing need for instruction.

Even so, there were no standardized methods, no peer-reviewed curriculum, and no professional training programs (as long enjoyed in Europe). Most instructors were basically winging it, teaching methods and protocols based almost entirely on their own experience. Quite naturally the quality of instruction varied. And people, especially novices, kept getting hurt.

The AMGA came along none too soon, bringing a



much-needed professionalism to the sport. Protocols were standardized, based on testing and years of applied techniques. And a world-class training program was developed—covering all aspects of climbing—for all aspiring guides.

It remains Adidas Outdoor's pleasure to promote and help sponsor the AMGA in this important work.

Adidas Outdoor joined the AMGA in 2013 and became the Official Approach Shoe of the Instructor Team in 2014. Adidas Outdoor helps our guides succeed thanks to their financial assistance, which pays for scholarships, programs, and other AMGA initiatives.



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A LINE OF HOPE



By Emilie Drinkwater, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide

LOCAL LORE SAYS THAT THIS valley is haunted by the ghost of a British woman. In the pre-Taliban 1970s, during a burst of climbing activity on the spectacular granite walls of Mir Samir, she is said to have fallen to her death from high on the peak. They say her abandoned body still hangs at the end of her rope somewhere on that steep, unforgiving face deep in the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan.

Our approach takes us through fields of pomegranate, poppies, and hemp and past the stone huts of shepherds and gem hunters toward the forgotten Mir Samir. I'm distracted by the potential for adventure and unclimbed routes in every direction. But my partners, 13 young Afghan women, are far more concerned about what haunts this valley. They're uneasy. For them, this ghost story is nothing short of true, and some say they sense the woman's presence. *Jinns* are not taken lightly in Islamic culture. I think back to a vague warning I'd been given before leaving home: *Anything can happen at any time.*

We're climbing higher, pushing for the top and running short on time, chasing the sun's last rays of light and warmth. A ceaseless wind seeps through our jackets; weeks at high altitude has thinned our bodies and stretched our minds. There have been so many days I didn't want to be here. I longed for the ease of climbing familiar mountains, of speaking English, of eating my own food. I can't take the oily rice and grisly lamb anymore. I can't take the fast and confusing Persian banter. On the summit, the girls want to linger and celebrate, but the long descent concerns me. So much loose rock, such questionable anchors, only one headlamp between three of us. This stress is familiar, almost reassuring. It happens on every big climb. Risk and achievement become inseparable, tangled in hope and desire and determination. Reaching the top can mean so much—but only if you make it back down.



In base camp the next morning, we sip weak, sugary green tea and lean against warm rock. Shopira traces the contours of distant mountains with her finger. It's an outline of hope... and an impressive link-up!

"We go there, and there, and there," she says in Dari. It's not a question. "*Koohb ast!* — It is good! We go now?" The language barrier is difficult, but I know what she's saying. At 19, she is supposed to get married soon and have children, stay home, stop her education. Mountain climbing isn't what Afghans do, and certainly not Afghan women. But she's athletic and

adventurous and driven. Climbing is what she *wants* to do.

Climbing is an opportunity to feel, for the first time, freedom. Freedom from oppression and violence, from decades of war, from the heat and pollution of Kabul. But in being here, these women have simply traded one danger for another: war for the possibility of falling, suicide bombs for being hit by loose rock, IEDs for shivering all night in the alpine far from their families and homes. Reaching the top of these peaks was once an inconceivable notion. Now it represents change and allows some sense of liberation



THE FLAG OF AFGHANISTAN FLOWN ATOP AN UNCLIMBED PEAK, HIGH ABOVE THE PANJSHIR VALLEY

PHOTO BY EMILIE DRINKWATER, AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE

from the expectations of life as an Afghan woman. Shopira has risked everything to be here. The whole team has. They would trade it for nothing else.

On our last night in the mountains, as porters start arriving to help ferry loads back down, word reaches us that a Mullah in a neighboring valley has ordered all Westerners and four Afghan girls dead. Alleged or not, the threat is unsettling, and we must leave quickly. We pack our base camp and begin a silent descent in the dark. Each step brings us closer to home, but not to the same lives we'd left just three weeks earlier.

The girls are returning to a war zone, a place in which they're strangely comfortable. In a landscape of disemboweled helicopters and military convoys, war is all they've ever known. Some will get married, some will go back to school. Some will continue climbing, and others have decided it's not for them. The hope for change exists and there is great vulnerability in getting there. But each girl, hidden behind her hijab and long sleeves, will return with the knowledge that things can be different. Better. *Anything can happen at any time.* ◀◀

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