

# GUIDE

## BULLETIN



45° 50' 4.3440" N  
6° 51' 49.6584" E

ANGELA HAWSE:  
THE ART OF JOY

SKIING FULL CIRCLE

SKI GUIDE PREP:  
10 TIPS

THE GUIDING  
LIFE, WITH  
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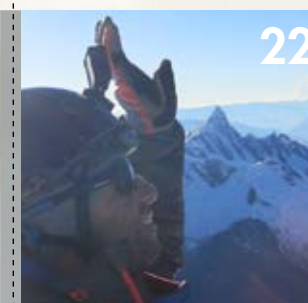
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> WINTER 2014

# GUIDE BULLETIN



On the cover: MILES SMART RAPPING INTO THE COSMIQUES COULOIR IN CHAMONIX. PHOTO BY GABE ROGEL



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# GUIDE

## BULLETIN

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This September, tragedy hit the Front Range of Colorado. Floods caused by biblical rains wiped out our trails and shut off access to most climbing areas, including Rocky Mountain National Park. My town, Lyons, Colo., was totally devastated, forcing a couple thousand of my fellow community members and me to find temporary homes elsewhere. To make matters worse, the government shutdown closed off access for many guides in the rest of the country. It has been a difficult year, to say the least.



By Betsy Winter

HOWEVER, I HAVE ALREADY SEEN these hardships strengthen our community. Local guides, skiers, climbers, and the organizations that represent them—the Boulder Climbing Community, the Access Fund, the American Alpine Club, and the AMGA—are working together more closely than ever. We cleaned each other's homes, we are already on the ground rebuilding our trails and parks, and we actively lobbied our legislators to stop the madness and start negotiating. Hundreds of climbers and skiers proved that they could mobilize more efficiently and harmoniously than our elected officials.

Ironical, isn't it? Well, not really.

The AMGA represents community—a community of committed, resourceful, and inspiring professional skiers and climbers. When the going gets tough, we find other, often better ways to make things happen. We do this by sharing our knowledge and expertise with each other. Events, such as the Annual Meeting, gave us the opportunity in 2013 to brainstorm, network, and find innovative solutions to closures. You can read about these solutions in this issue's Mountain Buzz news.

The bottom line is that we are experts at dealing with the unexpected. Unified in our love of the mountains, we understand that things like the weather or snow conditions can change drastically, within moments. But we are always ready and we are always prepared. I am confident that we will persevere despite the hardships we've faced this year. There is no hold out of our reach. «

STUDENTS IN AN AIAE LEVEL 2 COURSE  
 DIGGING SNOW PROFILES BENEATH THE  
 SHADOW OF 'RED LADY BOWL' OUTSIDE  
 CRESTED BUTTE, COLO.

PHOTO BY JAYSON SIMONS-JONES

38° 52' 10.9740" N, 106° 59' 16.1624" W



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THE ART OF JOY

ANGELA HAWSE GUIDING ON THE EXUM RIDGE, GRAND TETONS, WYO.  
PHOTO BY ACE KVALE

43° 54' 5.0256" N, 110° 46' 13.7172" W

# IFMGA GUIDE ANGELA HAWSE ON THE UPS AND DOWNS OF MOUNTAIN GUIDING

By Lizzy Scully

ANGELA HAWSE, OF RIDGWAY, COLO., has been married nine times...to the same woman. She and her wife, MonkE, have so much fun with their family and friends that they tie the knot every few years. Usually their weddings are small affairs, such as their most recent 2013 ceremony—the couple was the first to get a civil-union license in Ouray County. But their first shindig, in 2007, was a much larger event. First, MonkE found Hawse’s wedding dress in the Telluride free box. It was brand new, fit perfectly, and had an eight-foot train, and a \$3900 price tag. The couple then spraypainted both bridal dresses black for their “white wedding,” while everyone else in attendance wore white.

According to Hawse’s fellow guides, sponsors, and climbing partners, her positive outlook on life coupled with her strong commitment to her profession make her one of America’s best mountain guides. Hawse is fully certified by the AMGA, which makes her an International Federation of Mountain Guides Association (IFMGA)

mountain guide and one of only eight American women to achieve that feat. She has spent the better part of three decades working all over the world, from the Himalayas to the East and West coasts of America both guiding and teaching aspiring guides.

“Angela has an amazing amount of energy, fantastic perseverance, and a dedication to the sport of mountain craft that I have seen in few others,” says AMGA Executive Director Betsy Winter. “She inspires most everyone with whom she comes in contact.” Having spent a lot of time with Hawse in the mountains, Winter says, “She always makes you feel like you’re a rock star, no matter your climbing ability.”

For Hawse, it’s just another day in the guiding life. “It takes energy to be either cheerful or unhappy,” she says. “At 50, I’m keenly aware of what makes me feel good and what doesn’t. Making other people feel good makes me feel good, so trying to make others laugh and smile is something I do everyday.”

The diminutive Hawse has short-cropped hair, toned biceps, and stands 5’5”. (Her many seasons of carrying 75-to-80-pound packs have, she jokes, “compressed” her down an inch.) She first found her way to the outdoors growing up in the Allegheny Mountains »





# EQUIPMENT FOR CHOSS ENCOUNTERS

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of West Virginia, where she spent her summers exploring the forests and rivers and helping out on her grandparents' farm. Hawse discovered rock climbing in the early 1980s, while attending Prescott College in Arizona. There, she was inspired by her Wilderness Orientation course instructor David Lovejoy to pursue a degree in Outdoor Education. While still in school Hawse became an instructor for Outward Bound; in 1985, the year she graduated, she took a job as an adjunct at Prescott College teaching 21-day kayaking and rock-climbing courses. Hawse continued in these jobs until starting with the American Alpine Institute as a rock guide in 1993.

She has since led 20 expeditions around the world, from Denali to Ama Dablam to Everest, and become a senior guide for Exum Mountain Guides as well as a regular teacher for Chicks With Picks. Hawse also works as a heli-ski guide for Telluride Helitrax. Along the way she also earned a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in International Mountain Conservation. Hawse adheres to the motto of her alma mater that "Education is a journey, not a destination."

"I've always been driven to pursue more knowledge, education, and skills, to enhance my [guiding] skill set, be it snow science, reading weather, new technology, or natural history," Hawse says. "I want to do the best job I can, providing my guests with an exceptional experience that they will remember for the rest of their lives."

Which is why the AMGA asked her to be the first woman on the instructor team. In fact, says AMGA Technical Director Dale Remsberg, Hawse is one of the AMGA's best educators, thanks to her years of experience in academia along with her vast mountain expertise. "Angela is top notch with pre- and post-course follow up and the day-to-day flow and organization of courses and exams," Remsberg adds. "She is the example for everyone to follow."

Meanwhile, according to GORE-TEX® Marketing Director Diane Davidson, the company sponsored her for various reasons, primary among them being Hawse's vast technical skill set. Says Davidson, "Angela displays a high degree of technical ability and knowledge. Her dedication to the sport, as well as to the safety of those she leads, is undeniable."

Success hasn't come easily, and Hawse herself will be the first to admit she's not an off-the-couch high-level climber: "Keeping up with the 20s-30s crowd and long-legged buggers is something I have to work hard at. And I'm not very good at asking for help." I.e., despite being smaller than all of her male partners, she typically carries the same amount of weight. She also suffered a bad back injury in 2007 that didn't fully heal until 2010.

She also admits to having high expectations of herself and others that are sometimes unrealistic in the face of lesser human nature. Reminiscing about a 1998 expedition to Everest to help amputee Tom Whittaker make the mountain's first disabled ascent, she recalls assuming her climbing partner and Prescott College colleague would stick with her all the way. But in reality, after her summit bid, Hawse ended up descending alone from Everest's South Summit, past the South Col down to camp III on the Lhotse Face where she spent the night solo.

"My partner [had] blasted ahead, and I only caught up to him at the South Col where he was passed out in the tent," Hawse says. The next day, he bailed again: "I quickly watched him disappear into the distance." Hawse was frustrated by her partner's behavior, as well as by his taking most of the credit for summiting. But, she says, the experience helped put her ego in check and inspired her to take a closer look at why she wanted to be a mountain guide.

Her conclusion? Guiding is the way for her to share her passion for and love of the mountains with others and to develop lifelong relationships and connections. Hawse has numerous repeat customers and also regularly climbs with fellow guides, such as New River Mountain Guide owner »

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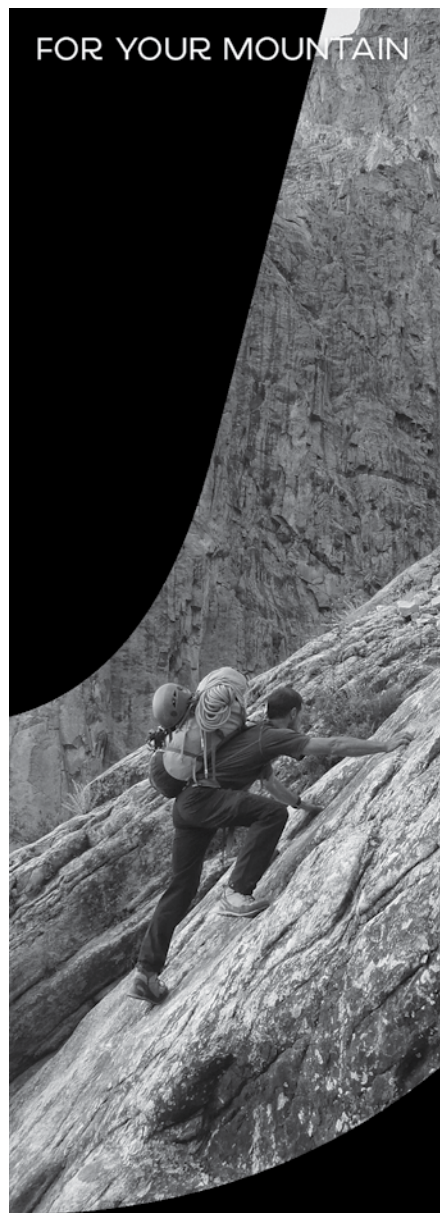
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PHOTO BY GABE ROGEL

"Making other people feel good makes me feel good, so trying to make others laugh and smile is something I do every day."

Elaina Arenz, with whom she climbed the *South Buttress* (IV 5.8) of Adamant Mountain in summer 2013.

"She's inspiring and a great mentor," says Arenz. "As one of the first female IFMGA certified guides in the country, she is what I aspire to be one day." Hawse, she adds, gets the job done, keeps things fun, but still manages to lead a balanced life despite her insane travel/work schedule. (Hawse estimates she's on the road five to nine months a year.) To keep energy levels high and stay fit for her job, Hawse does a workout developed by Rob Shaul, a trainer she worked with for many years in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

"I can do his workouts from afar...campus board, pull-up bar, sandbags, boxes, tires in the yard, some kettlebells and a barbell," she says. It's simple stuff, she adds, focused on mountain sports to improve durability, strength, and endurance. And it complements her regular mountain-biking and rock-climbing excursions.

Hawse admits that she leads an idyllic life. She's grateful for her loving family, successful guiding career, partnership with MonKE, home in the San Juans, the guests she gets to work with, the privilege of working in beautiful and unique wild places, her flexible schedule, and, most of all, the inspiration she feels on a daily basis.

"There's nothing like a good day in the mountains," Hawse says. "Moving over lots of terrain, either easy or hard, is one of the most satisfying things ever. I love the heightened sense of awareness for rock features, my body tension, the position, the aesthetics and, ultimately, the pleasure of sharing that experience with a partner or guest. I want to do this forever." «



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# SKIING

# FULL CIRCLE

THE PATH TO MASTERY

*Story & Photos by Jayson Simons-Jones*

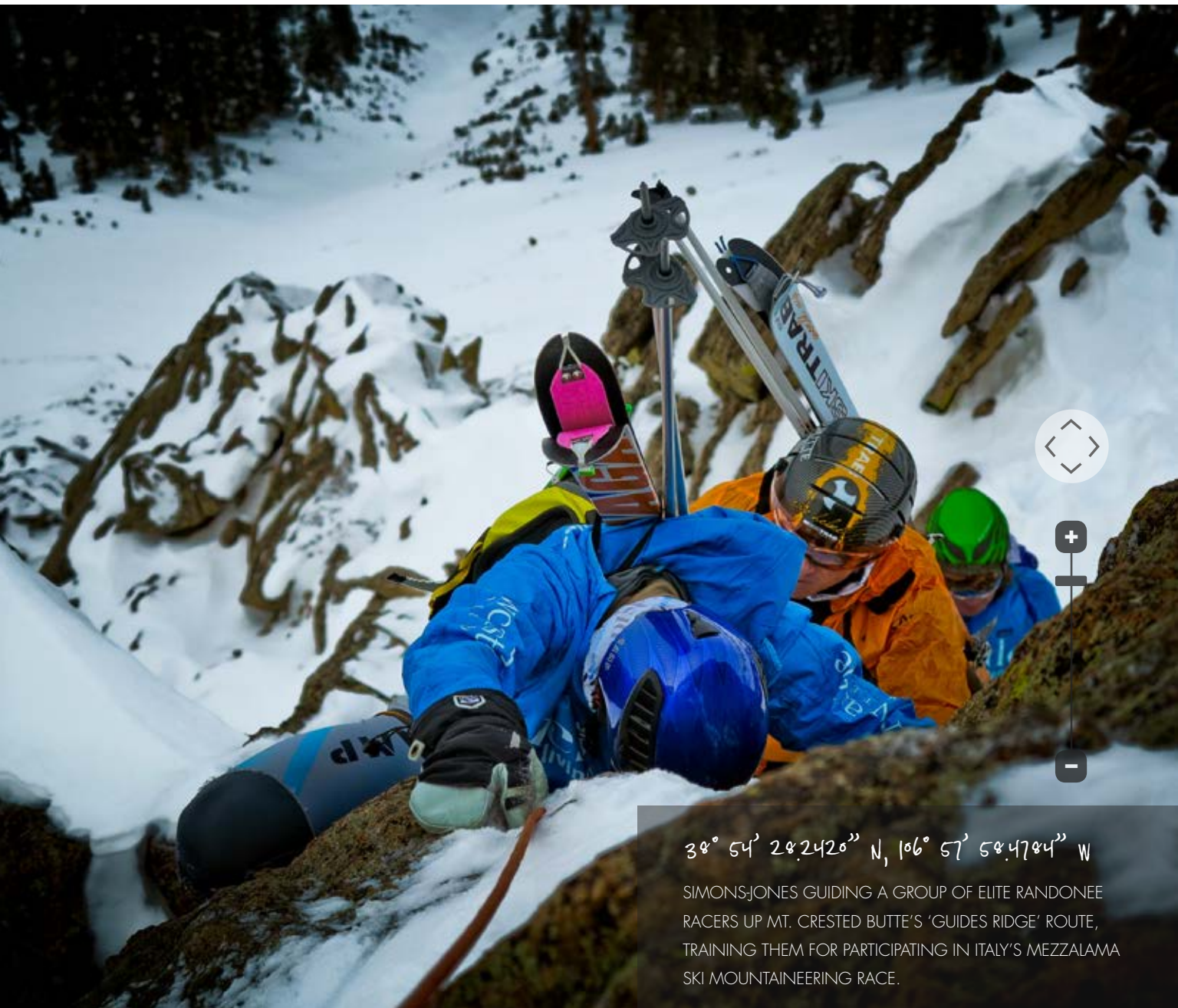
CLIENTS SKI TOURING UP TO THE  
COL DE CHARDONNET ON  
THE HAUTE ROUTE, CHAMONIX, FRANCE

46° 0' 23.6016" N, 7° 4' 5.9988" E



**W**E STEP OUT OF THE TRUCK.  
Fresh snow crunches under our feet.  
The last hours of darkness cling to the hillsides under the brightness of a full moon. As we silently unload the truck, put skins on, cram feet in ski boots, drink coffee, and eat a little food, darkness gives way to dawn's soft glow. We complete our ritual of suiting up for a day of backcountry ski touring, and our thoughts give way to excited chatter, plans, and enthusiasm for the potential of what lies ahead, up the mountain. »





38° 54' 28.2426" N, 106° 57' 58.4784" W

SIMONS JONES GUIDING A GROUP OF ELITE RANDONEE RACERS UP MT. CRESTED BUTTE'S 'GUIDES RIDGE' ROUTE, TRAINING THEM FOR PARTICIPATING IN ITALY'S MEZZALAMA SKI MOUNTAINEERING RACE.

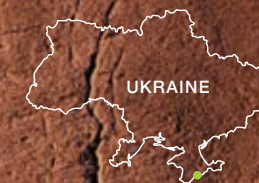
I am 25 years old and at a trailhead outside Crested Butte with a few other eager, aspiring mountain guides. We are attending a four-day ski-guide training based out of a backcountry hut nestled deep in the heart of Colorado's Elk Mountains. Our guide and teacher, the local Swiss legend Jean Pavillard, is small in stature but large on experience. He's done this as long as some of us have been alive. None of us can match his energy and excitement.

I am still young and impressionable, though I don't admit it. I have only a few years under my belt as a "backcountry guide." Pre-dawn alpine starts and cold toes still excite me. Yet it's only »

"Jean's passion is pure, earned, and created through a lifetime of moments in the mountains with others."

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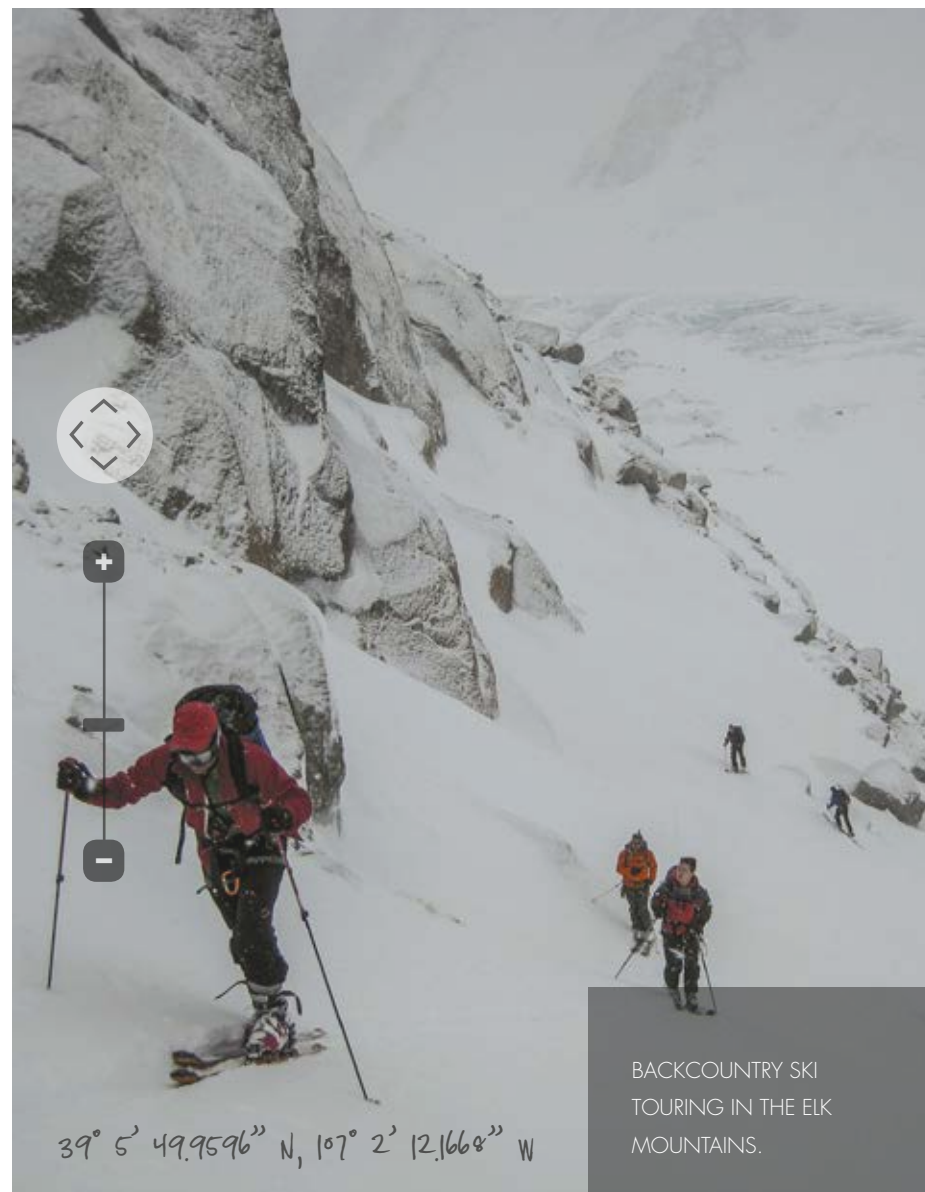



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a youthful enthusiasm, limited and exhaustible by definition. Jean's passion is pure, earned, and created through a lifetime of moments in the mountains with others. I think his passion must be deeper, more cherished by its owner, and thus more authentic. After all, Jean has had endless powder mornings and days in the backcountry with friends and clients. And to continue to do this work after a lifetime of discomfort, close calls, challenges, and hard work...I'm excited about the prospect.

I'm nearly 38 now, and have since inherited the small ski-guide company in Crested Butte that my Swiss guide and mentor founded almost 20 years ago. I still ski-tour out of that same trailhead, although the backcountry hut we used on that first training 13 years ago has burned down. I still get out of the truck in the pre-dawn hours and feel grateful for the gentle flakes that fall from a dark sky. I enjoy childish excitement at yet another morning of silently skinning through a forest blanketed in white and of skiing endless powder amidst the majesty of the Colorado backcountry. »



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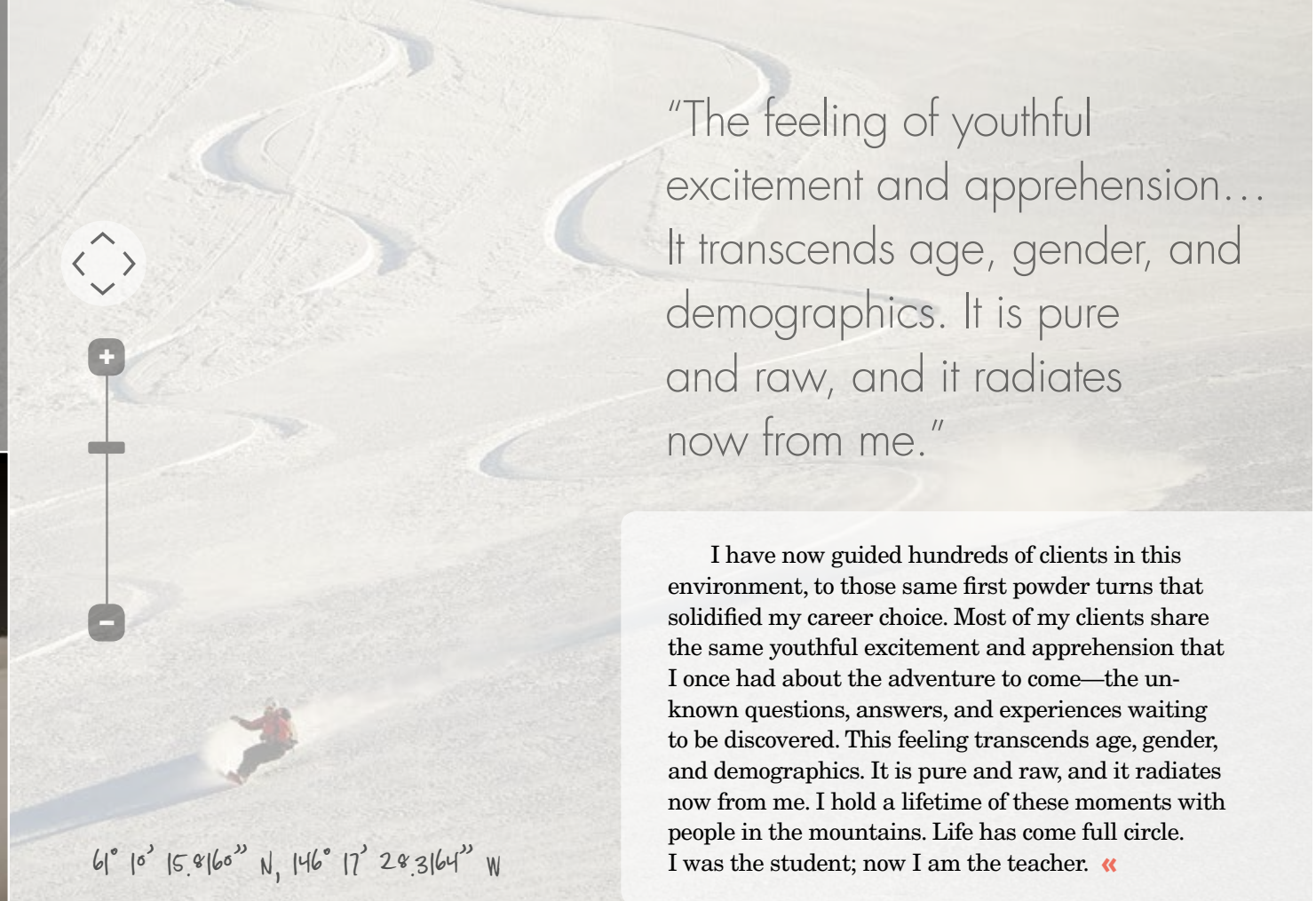




38° 54' 35.5320" N  
106° 56' 0.7332" W

(COLLAGE) THE CRESTED BUTTE BACKCOUNTRY.

(RIGHT) A GUIDED GROUP OF SNOWBOARDERS ON THE THOMPSON PASS AREA OF VALDEZ, ALASKA.



"The feeling of youthful excitement and apprehension... It transcends age, gender, and demographics. It is pure and raw, and it radiates now from me."

I have now guided hundreds of clients in this environment, to those same first powder turns that solidified my career choice. Most of my clients share the same youthful excitement and apprehension that I once had about the adventure to come—the unknown questions, answers, and experiences waiting to be discovered. This feeling transcends age, gender, and demographics. It is pure and raw, and it radiates now from me. I hold a lifetime of these moments with people in the mountains. Life has come full circle. I was the student; now I am the teacher. «

61° 10' 15.8160" N, 146° 17' 28.3164" W



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**LIVE BIG**

Philippe Batoux - Cognac, Italy © P. Tournante

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# MANAGE 2 MULTI-PITCH ICE CLIENTS

Ice-climbing season is upon us, with ascents already happening across North America.



With the unusually wet summer and fall, it should prove a fantastic year to swing the tools. But great ice-climbing conditions—cold and wet—also offer high potential for client discomfort, even if you bring lots of hot drinks. Thus, keeping clients moving is a high priority. With one client, this is fairly straightforward; however, efficient progress becomes trickier with two.

By Dale Remsberg

**W**HEN GUIDING ROCK, THE KEY TO efficiency is good rope management: twisting, stacking, separating, and such. For ice, the rope work is relatively straightforward, as the ropes have to stay separated, so I like to focus on pitch management instead. On a particularly loose rock pitch, it's a no-brainer to have two clients climb caterpillar style, one at a time. But on long ice climbs, when falling ice is a near certainty on every pitch, we often don't have this luxury. Instead, when the pitch is wide enough, we can manage it so that both clients climb simultaneously, side-by-side, without shelling each other with ice.

The goal is to set up a second rope on an alternate line of ascent, ideally at least three meters to the side of the lead rope. The second rope should be directed through a solid screw near the top of the pitch with a locking-carabiner quickdraw (and then, if possible, both ropes should run through a single common directional just below the belay). Through coaching, the guide should keep the clients at approximately the same height, to minimize the risk of falling ice. When done properly, the clients will have minimal down time during which to get cold, will be protected from falling ice dislodged by the guide or each other, and will have a great time whacking away at the frozen stuff.

First off, you'll need some extra equipment:

- Two single ropes
- Two auto-block belay devices
- Extra ice screws
- Extra quickdraws with one locker draw for the key directional

There are also a few important safety considerations. First and foremost, you should keep a tight belay on the clients. With rope stretch, even toprope

falls can be long enough for a client to put one of her many sharps points through some part of her buddy's body. Finding good belay stances can also be tricky: The spot that's best for managing seconding clients might not be the one that's best protected from ice falling off the pitch above, so be prepared to move the belay if necessary.

Ideally, you'll run both ropes through a final directional just before the belay so that the ropes apply the same angle of force to your belay device. If not, the two ropes will come into the device at very different angles—and if one rope is weighted, the other may not catch if your hand is not in a strong braking position. For this reason, it's best to have two devices at the ready.

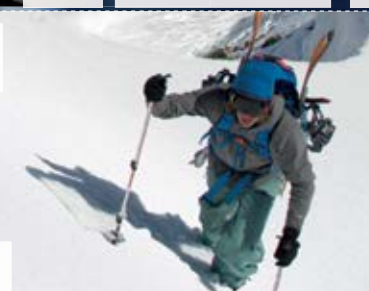
Finally, it's important to account for the fact that one client will be climbing terrain that you, the guide, did not. Most basically, as you climb you should thoroughly evaluate the second line of ascent for difficulty and unseen hazards. Much judgment goes into deciding which client should climb which side: Maybe you send the stronger client into the unknown, or maybe you lead the steeper bit, thus allowing the weaker client to climb the easy side without having to remove screws. There's no cut-and-dry strategy, just sound decision-making. «

**Bonus Tip:** Unless there's competition to be the first on a route, stop 15 minutes before the base of the route and gear up with your clients. That way, when you arrive at the base, your clients will be warmed up and ready for their first belay session.

> MORE TIPS FROM REMSBERG AT [AMGA.COM](http://AMGA.COM)



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*Eddie Bauer*

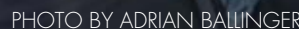
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*By Zoe Hart*



You only get 26,320 days, more or less. How will you spend them?



# ANDREW YASSO

A YOUNG GUIDE FINDS MEANING  
IN THE MEANINGLESS *By Lizzy Scully*

39° 48' 41.7780" N, 114° 24' 11.6484" W



A LATE MARCH  
NIGHTSCAPE AT SPRING  
MOUNTAIN RANCH  
DURING THE 2013 RED  
ROCK RENDEZVOUS.  
YASSO REGULARLY  
GUIDES THIS EVENT  
IN NEVADA FOR  
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ALPINE INSTITUTE.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW  
GOOCH, COURTESY OF  
MOUNTAINGEAR.COM

"I think it's really cool  
what we do. You don't  
want to overstate your  
importance, but you are  
really making people's  
dreams come true."

**I**N 2006, JUST THREE DAYS BEFORE he was to leave for Marine Corps boot camp and having just turned 18, Andrew Yasso broke every bone in his left leg mountain biking. He took a drop, nearly missed a tree, bailed off, and started running down the hill. On his third step, his foot went into a hole, he crushed his ankle on impact, broke his femur backwards, and got a spiral fracture in his tibia/fibula.

Yasso did not go to war. Instead, he went to the climbing gym, a small one at Central Michigan University. "[Michigan is] the worst place to be a rock climber," he jokes. But climbing was the only rehab he was willing to do. Lifting weights, working out—Yasso considers those activities pointless. "Rock climbing is even more pointless, but it's the kind of pointless I like," he says.

Now 25, Yasso is in his third year of guiding. In 2013, he won the Petzl Scholarship, which pays full tuition for a course in any discipline. The AMGA recently chatted with him about the guiding life.

**AMGA:** *Why climb?*

**ANDREW YASSO:** It started as a way to rehab my leg, and it turned into a lifestyle. I use it to recharge myself, to challenge myself, to see where I can go. Then I feel happier and more fulfilled in other areas of my life.

**AMGA:** *But you find climbing pointless?*

**AY:** [Laughs] Of course I get spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional gains from climbing. But at the end of the day, it makes no difference if I stood on top.

**AMGA:** *And why guide?*

**AY:** I'm psyched on guiding. I think it's really cool what we do. It's this balance of taking it lightly and seriously. You don't want to overstate your importance, but you really are making people's dreams come true. And to me that's super valuable.

Plus, climbing is inherently selfish; guiding is inherently for someone else. I get to provide for people, help them realize their goals or just have a good day out. It turns climbing into something that is quite useful and quite powerful in my life and others' lives.



**AMGA:** *When did you first consider a guiding career?*

**AY:** At an ice-climbing festival in

Michigan, [AMGA-certified guide] Dawn Glanc was one of the presenters. She talked about her adventures and being from a small town in Ohio. Her parents weren't climbers or outdoorsy. That resonated with me because my family is supportive, but they don't get what I do. So I talked to her after the show. She suggested I take a course. I saved up all my money, and as a sophomore I went to the American Alpine Institute [AAI] in Washington and took courses. I thought, Wow, this is really cool, fun, awesome, and challenging. How cool for the guides; they get to climb, but they also get to teach and share.

**AMGA:** *Any memorable experiences from that period?*

**AY:** I had the opportunity to climb with Kurt Hicks during his certification process. He went up to the Canadian Rockies to take his Ice Instructor Course, and he took me along as his client. It was a great opportunity to watch real professional guides evaluate each other and improve.

**AMGA:** *How does guiding fulfill you?*

**AY:** I sometimes climb the same route five or six times in a season. The climbing might not be super interesting or engaging, but I've got this whole new set of people with me, and I'm now seeing it through their eyes. That makes it a whole new experience for me as well. It's great to teach people stuff and see those light-bulb moments, and to know they are going to go out and implement what they learned.

**AMGA:** *Why take AMGA courses?*

**AY:** They empower me as a climber and guide. On our AAI business cards it says we are instructors and guides. We really want to teach people to be self-sufficient. It's a little bit like working yourself out of a job, but I'm OK with that. Most people keep coming back because there's so much more to learn.

**AMGA:** *Anything further you'd like to share?*

**AY:** I want to thank Petzl. They have been hugely supportive, and they've asked nothing of me. It shows that it's not just guides believing in guides; it's outside organizations believing in what we do as well. «

> READ THE REST OF THE Q&A WITH YASSO  
ON THE GUIDING LIFE BLOG:

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# GET YOUR GUIDE ON

AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT IT TAKES FOR YOU TO BECOME AMGA/IFMGA CERTIFIED

**D**ESPITE GUIDING FOR TEN YEARS on the West Coast, Dale Remsberg hadn't heard of the AMGA or the IFMGA. But after moving to Boulder, Colo., in 2002, and not finding a job in his chosen métier, he needed to take action. He discovered that most guides on the Front Range had AMGA training and that many were aspiring to IFMGA certification, and so he decided to get his foot in the door. He took his first AMGA program and never looked back.

"As soon as I got a taste of the training and experienced the great instructors, it became obvious that I had to do this," he says. Remsberg took the fast track to IFMGA certification, earning it in three and a half years, and is now the AMGA's technical director. It typically takes five to seven years to go through the IFMGA process.

According to AMGA Executive Director Betsy Winter, Remsberg is a great example of a "classic" IFMGA guide.

"Dale is goal driven and ready for the next big challenge in life," she says. "Once he started the program, there was nothing getting in the way of him finishing. Most of our IFMGA guides have an internal competition with themselves to finish. They really go for it."

*So, what does it mean to be a "classic" IFMGA guide?* According to outgoing AMGA Board President Margaret Wheeler, it's hard to generalize, because the community is so diverse. But, she says, "IFMGA guides are committed to the idea of guiding as a profession. They desire to improve as guides, and they desire to be trained to the fullest extent possible."

Colorado Mountain School guide Eric "Wheels" Whewell agrees: "I wanted to be held to a standard. I wanted to challenge myself to get through that process," he says. Whewell started guiding in the early 2000s and received his IFMGA certification in April 2013. One of his biggest challenges was transforming from a casual, recreational climber to a detail-oriented professional.

"The spotlight is on you because you're a guide," he explains. "As a recreational climber, things are no big deal. Now I'm really detail oriented with all my systems. I want to maintain a level of professionalism at all times in the mountains." It also helps to have certain personality traits. Loyalty, self-awareness, a willingness to learn, and a commitment to teaching and keeping clients safe in the mountains.

"IFMGA guides are loyal to their employers and fellow



NEWLY CERTIFIED IFMGA GUIDES PATRICK ORMOND, ERIC WHEWELL, ANDREW COUNCELL, AND JEDIAH PORTER JUST AFTER GETTING "PINNED" AT THE ANNUAL MEETING. PHOTO BY KARSTEN DELAP

guides," Remsberg says. "If one of your fellow guides needed help in the mountains or in life, you would bend over backwards to help him because you've seen him go through this process."

They have to, because attaining IFMGA certification takes a significant time and financial commitment. Aspiring guides must complete 90-plus days of AMGA course work, 14 days of avalanche training, and wilderness first responder and cardiopulmonary resuscitation classes. Plus, they must meet rigorous prerequisites (i.e., they need to be solid rock, mountain, and ice climbers, as well as skiers). "Courses can be demanding physically, mentally, and emotionally. I have heard students say of the Advanced Alpine Guide Course that they would never want to do that again," says Henry Beyer, AMGA Program Director. "This career track is not for the faint of heart."

"It's a stressful progression that puts you in very hazardous situations in the mountains, under a lot of scrutiny," adds Remsberg. "You are under the magnifying glass. And if you don't rise to the occasion and be a leader, it's not going to be much fun."

In fact, many people start the process and then drop out. Whewell understands why. "Failing my ski exam was horrible. I had worked super hard, and to fall short...that was tough. I had a whole year of waiting and being frustrated and tormented." But he was driven and ultimately says it was worth it. "It's definitely a rewarding experience in the end. It doesn't always seem like it's going to be...It's exactly like climbing a big wall. When it was over, I was glad I had done it." «

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## A Unified Front

*Guides address important issues, show new cohesiveness at 2013 AMGA Annual Meeting*

From the round table to the clinics to the social events, most participants agreed this Annual Meeting was the most successful yet. About 175 people attended the social events, awards ceremony, and professional development clinics run by AMGA Staff Instructors, who were paid for the first time. Plus, the AMGA introduced its exciting High Altitude Symposium.

“Our goal was to increase the value of the Annual Meeting to our membership, including the overall level of professionalism and professional-development opportunities,” said Outreach & Advocacy Director Scott Massey. “By doing the Symposium as the introductory event, we set the bar high.”

According to Fox Mountain Guides Owner and AMGA Board Member Karsten Delap, the Symposium illustrated the purpose of the AMGA and its guides, offering the latest and greatest information. “That’s what we are all about—education,” said Delap, adding that this year’s Annual Meeting showed that the AMGA and

its guides are moving the profession forward as a cohesive unit.

AMGA Technical Director Dale Remsberg agreed, saying: “In the past the guiding community was a lot more divided. But as we have continued to work on common goals, those gaps have closed. We are addressing these tough issues head on.”

Massey addressed one sensitive subject at the October 24 Round Table: certification of guides working for accredited businesses. The Board of Directors recently decided that all field staff of AMGA-accredited businesses must be AMGA trained for the terrain in which they work. Guides hired before January 1, 2008, who did in-house training are exempt if they continue to work for the business that hired them, but all field staff hired after that date must be AMGA trained.

“There was a widespread perception that our accreditation program was devaluing our certified guides,” Massey explained. “We are now holding the credential of accreditation to the same level as certification.” Feedback has been mostly positive, he added, though with concerns that turnover at smaller guide services might cause accreditation programs to fall apart.

“But,” said Massey, “with increasing numbers of guides taking AMGA programs, there will be a bigger hiring pool in upcoming years.” Plus, he added, certification-based access gives the AMGA more bargaining power with land managers, who will be assured that all guides working for AMGA-accredited services are also AMGA certified.

Another issue addressed was the perception of who has access. Currently no national directives apply universally to national parks, which has created contention around whether guide services or individuals should have access.

“But both options can work and are appropriate for American guiding,” Remsberg said. The AMGA, he added, is actively lobbying legislators “at a DC level” to encourage them to establish a directive for all national parks. “Around the country barriers are being broken down thanks to guides and guide services working more closely with each other and the AMGA.”

“There is real change happening, and we are becoming a strong organization,” added Delap. “The AMGA leadership continues to get stronger because the members are stepping up to [our shared] challenges.” <<

> READ MORE ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING, PLUS SEE MORE PHOTOS. PLEASE VISIT [AMGA.COM/CATEGORY/ANNUAL-MEETING](http://AMGA.COM/CATEGORY/ANNUAL-MEETING)



PHOTOS BY KARSTEN DELAP

(LEFT) JAMES BRONSON OF ARC'TERYX AND AMGA SINGLE PITCH INSTRUCTOR CODY BRADFORD PRACTICE SHORT ROPING IN ELDORADO CANYON. (BOTTOM) AMGA INSTRUCTOR TEAM MEMBER OLIVIA RACE TEACHES A CLINIC; GREG GERMAN OF ACTION COMMITTEE FOR ELDORADO IN THE BACKGROUND.

(THIS PAGE ) ROUND TABLE ATTENDEES LISTENING TO THE PRESENTATION AND ENJOYING ONE OF THE MANY ANNUAL MEETING SOCIAL EVENTS, INCLUDING THE BEER PROVIDED BY UPSLOPE BREWERY.



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## High Altitude Symposium *The first of its kind*

With its one-day seminar Advanced Mountain Medicine for Guides, the AMGA took its educational opportunities to the next level. The seminar brought together medical experts with an audience of professional high-altitude and aspiring high-altitude guides, and was led by Dr. Peter Hackett, director of the Institute of Altitude Medicine and founder of Denali Medical Research.

“High-altitude illness is an objective hazard that deserves special attention because it can be avoided if people know what to do,” said AMGA Executive Director Betsy Winter. However, she added, because the science is relatively new, to date there had been no opportunities to bring together doctors and scientists with the high-altitude guides who most need to know about these hazards.

Winter said the symposium’s success exceeded the AMGA’s expectations, and reinforced its commitment to facilitating more such conferences at the Annual Meeting.

According to the American Alpine Institute’s Director of Operations and new AMGA Board Member



(LEFT) PARTICIPANTS TESTING THE HYPERBARIC CHAMBER AT THE HIGH ALTITUDE SYMPOSIUM, AND (RIGHT) CLINICS TOOK PLACE IN ELDORADO CANYON AND THE BOULDER ROCK CLUB IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE SYMPOSIUM.

PHOTOS BY KARSTEN DELAP



Jason Martin, this year’s meeting was the best he has attended primarily because of the Symposium.

“If I had known how good it was going to be, I would have sent every guide on staff to it,” Martin said. “You don’t get this kind of education in a Wilderness First Responder class.” Most people who work in the high mountains have a baseline understanding of high-altitude physiology, but myths remain, Martin added. “This symposium lifted the veil on a lot of things.”

Benegas Brothers Expeditions owner Willie Benegas agreed, adding that he sees less experienced people take dangerous shortcuts to acclimatize. With conclusive, research-based evidence this should happen less often.

“No one should die from HAPE [high-altitude pulmonary edema],” Benegas explained. “If you recognize the symptoms right away, you should be able to fix the problem. This conference was just about that.”

The symposium not only reinforced prevention systems already familiar to Benegas, he said, but was also a great introduction for aspiring guides.

“In the past we had to learn whatever we could from whatever publication we could find or through personal experience,” Benegas explained. “In my 20 years of guiding, this was the first time I had well-known doctors speak to me about the problems of high-altitude sickness and how to prevent it. It was really unique.” «

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Photo // Forest Woodward  
Graham Zimmerman, Mt. Waddington, BC



Ethan Pringle and Mike Libeck, Southeast Greenland  
Photo: Keith Ladzinski



## Closing Ceremony Honors

*AMGA honors new American Mountain Guides, extraordinary guides, industry, board members old & new*

At the closing ceremonies of this year's Annual Meeting, the AMGA honored Petzl with the Industry Award, along with three guides and nine newly certified American Mountain Guides—the organization's highest achievers.

According to AMGA Technical Director Dale Remsberg, the highlight was the IFMGA Pin Ceremony, which recognized the effort it took these guides to earn their AMGA/IFMGA certification. A crowd of 150 gave a standing ovation to the four in attendance—Patrick Ormond, Eric Whewell, Jediah Porter, and Andrew Councell. Other newly certified guides include: Gary Kuehn, Gary Falk, Lee Lazzara, Aaron Mainer, and Thor Husted.

The Lifetime Achievement in Mountain Guiding Award went to the first female to be fully certified as an American Mountain Guide—Kathy Cosley, who Skyped in from Les Houches, France, at 4:30 a.m. her time. According to fellow AMGA/IFMGA guide Angela Hawse, Cosley charted the course for female guides working with



AMGA ROCK AND ALPINE GUIDE AND SINGLE PITCH INSTRUCTOR PROVIDER JOEY THOMPSON WALKING OFF STAGE WITH HIS OUTSTANDING GUIDE AWARD. PHOTOS BY KARSTEN DELAP

the AMGA: “She was extremely influential..., teaching female guides the important differences in techniques for women while guiding in a male-dominated community.”

The Outstanding Guide Award went to Joey Thompson, with the presenter Remsberg calling Thompson humble, willing to learn, and dedicated to becoming

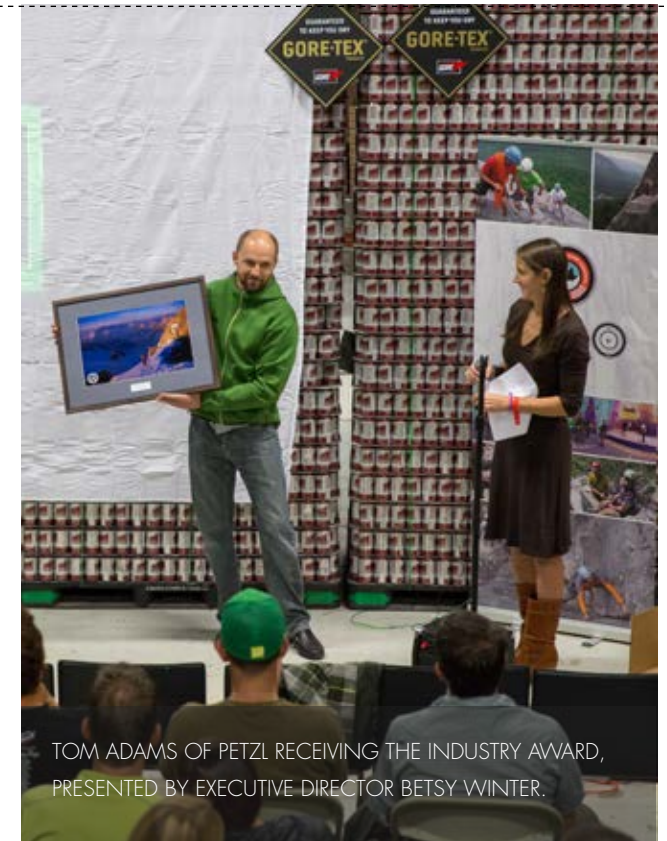
a fully certified American Mountain Guide. “He is mister magic. His clients love him!” said Remsberg.

Margaret Wheeler, outgoing board president, presented The Presidents Award to Majka Burhardt. An author, professional climber, filmmaker, and entrepreneur, Burhardt “has a passion for creating unusual connections,” Wheeler said.

Burhardt was honored both to receive the award and to be serving on the board: “This is a community I respect and cherish, and I’m greatly moved to receive this award for the work I do blending cultural, environmental, and social initiatives with climbing,” she said. Burhardt is building partnerships for the conservation of Mozambique’s Mt. Namuli.

The Industry Award went to Petzl, a business that has contributed significantly to the growth of the guiding profession. “Petzl understands the needs of professional guides and has gone above and beyond to help the AMGA inspire and support a culture of American mountain craft,” said Executive Director Betsy Winter.

Finally, on behalf of the AMGA, Winter said goodbye to board members Pete Keane, Lou Patterson, Scott Soden, Evan Stevens, and Jim Pearson, expressing appreciation for their years of service and support. «



TOM ADAMS OF PETZL RECEIVING THE INDUSTRY AWARD, PRESENTED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETSY WINTER.

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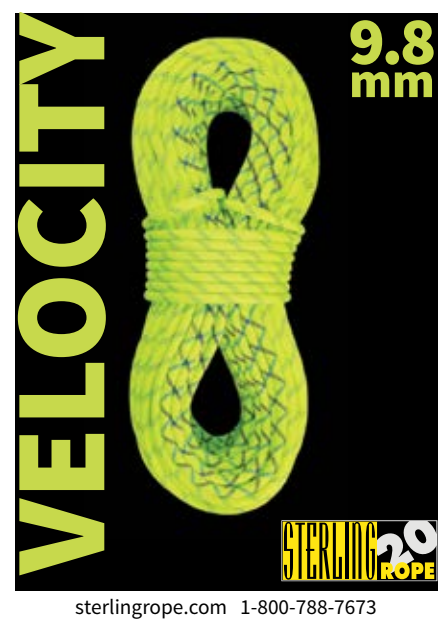
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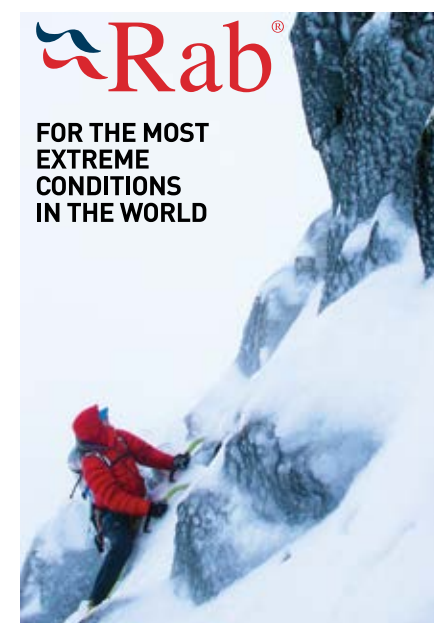
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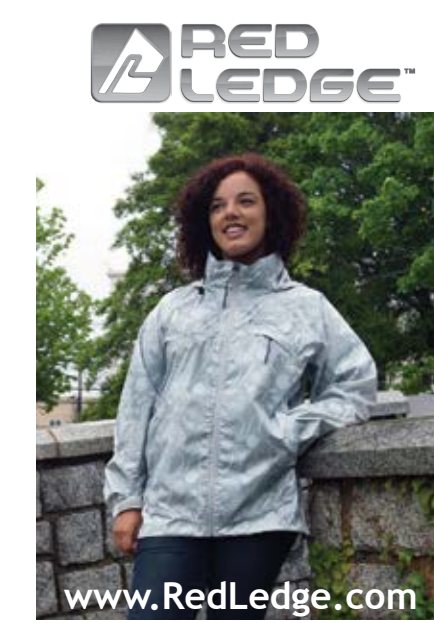
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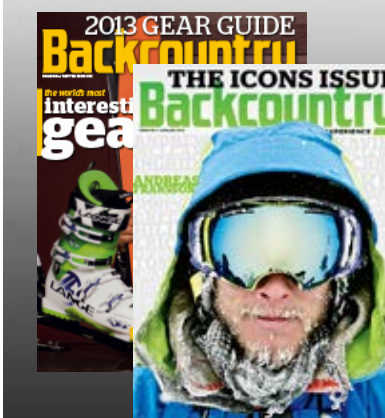
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# THE LONG GAME

Winter 1995. Doug and I stood atop exposed 40-degree rock slabs high on the Opalescent Slides on Mt. Colden, in New York's Adirondack State Park. It had been a lean winter, better suited to ice climbing. Stability was good. Quality and quantity were the real issues, but recent snowfall had inspired us to get out in the backcountry. It was Doug's birthday, so I suggested he drop in first.



By *Jesse Williams*

**D**OUg, HOWEVER, SUGGESTED I MAKE the first few turns on the exposed headwall, and then pull out below, "just so he could see what the snow was like." Untracked powder, six miles in and more than 2,000 feet up in the East's greatest wilderness, is a special commodity. It had taken a lot of hard work to get here, and I couldn't believe he was giving me the goods! I buckled my boots tight, secured the Peruvian-hat ear tassels under my chin, and launched. I jumped simultaneously up into the air and downslope, swinging my poles around in a half arc. The snow was deceptively thin, however, and I could feel my steel edges bite into the gritty anorthosite slabs underneath as I landed. Instantly I realized both a) the vulnerability of my position, and b) why Doug had offered me first tracks. Out on the face there was barely enough snow to ski over the rock slabs, but definitely enough for a nasty butt slide with little hope of self-arrest. My thighs burned as I perched on angulated edges and considered my predicament. If you're gonna be naive, you better be strong. At 23, I was still a little of both.

"Thanks, man. That's all I needed to see," Doug said as he traversed over another 50 feet to a scraggly line of stunted spruce that had captured a ski-length-wide, shin-deep drift. He pointed his belly button down the fall line and punched out a series of tight, symmetrical tele-hop turns, finessing his feet in and out of the variable crust. Doug waited below where our lines converged while I scratched my way down to him, breathing a little easier as the exposure lessened and the snowpack deepened.

I've known Doug since winter 1995. We both worked as rookie ski patrollers at Jay Peak in northern Vermont. We'd first met earlier that fall when he picked me up to carpool north in his Vanagon. Fifteen minutes later, we were rocking out to one of the hundreds of live Grateful Dead shows carefully catalogued on cassette racks in his van. The conversation quickly converged into mutual agreement on the obvious virtues of telemark skiing. We were new housemates and coworkers by circumstance, but quickly became friends and partners.

Older and more experienced, Doug became my first real mentor in the backcountry-ski world. He showed

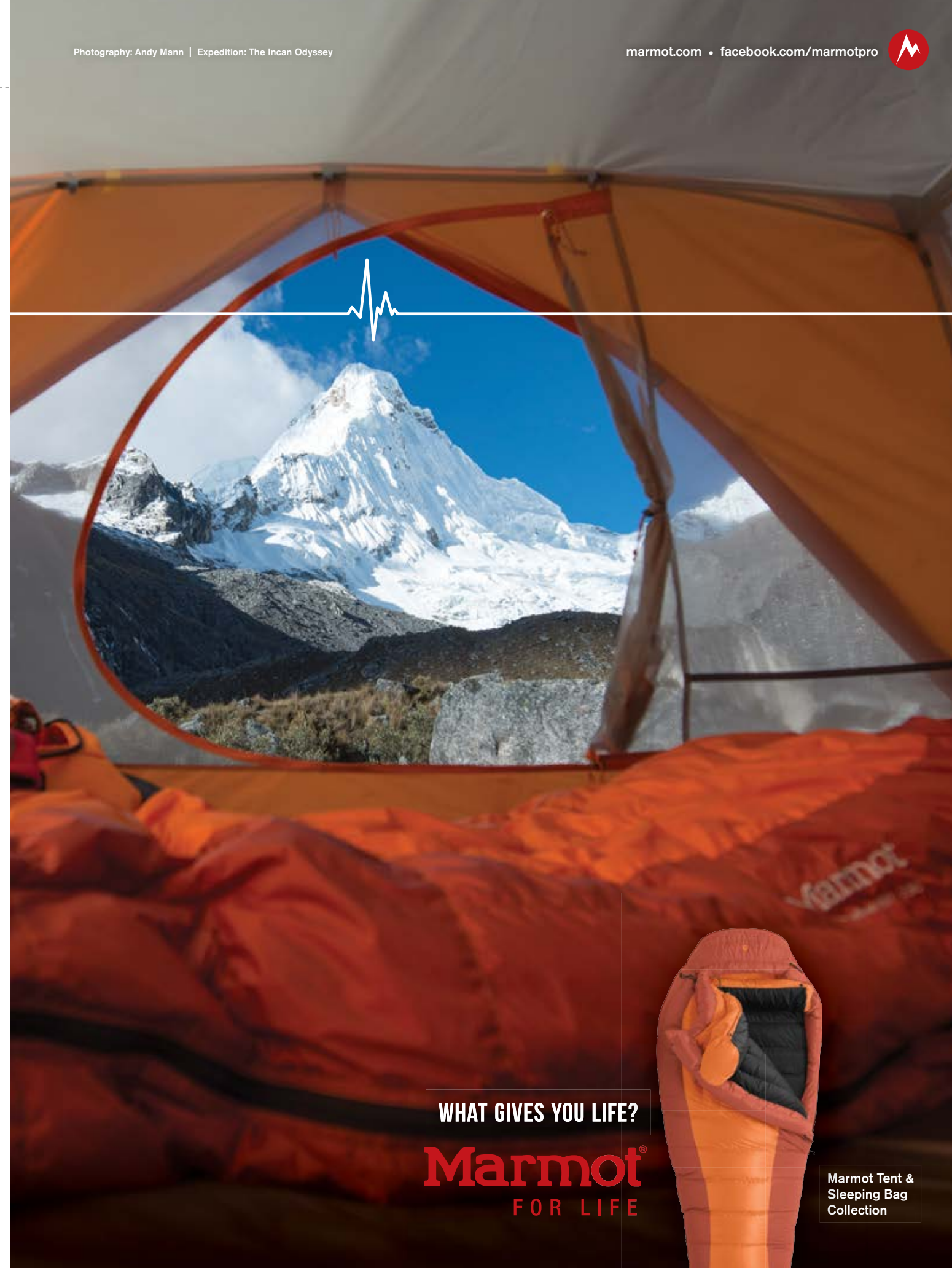
me how to achieve the long game in life by steadily and deliberately ticking off the incremental short games. We both eventually sought more sustainable careers. Doug went back to engineering school, initially just in the warmer off-seasons and then full-time. He now designs and installs remote alternative-energy systems. He rides his mountain bike or skis to work from his hand-built timber-frame home in the Mad River Valley.

I eventually learned how to really ski by following Doug through woods and chutes, through the full spectrum of effortless powder, buttery groomers, waist-deep snow with 20 percent water content, tricky frozen windslabs, firm rain crusts, and boilerplate water-ice. At one point he skied on an old mismatched pair of skis for a few weeks after unintentionally trashing one ski. Doug's smooth turns on the scrappiest terrain constantly reminded me that the true skill is not in the plane; it's in the pilot. When someone complained about challenging conditions or inadequate equipment, he would gently chide them, "Maybe you should just try more finesse?"

At some point, like Doug, I made the decision to pursue a professional career. I wanted to become a mountain guide. I viewed training and certification as a similar form of technical graduate school. The required progression through formal training, assessment, and personal experience marks a series of small but very necessary steps to complete in the eventual pursuit of the long game. Winning the long game does not end with certification, but with the development of a sustainable and productive professional career.

Winter 2012. Doug, myself, and Pete "the Sween"—another Vermont ski-patrol buddy—are touring across the Wapta Icefield in the Canadian Rockies. Intermittent clouds threaten a whiteout, but as we crest Wapta Col, the clouds lift, revealing an immaculate slope of windblown powder between us and Bow Hut, more than 500 meters below. I quickly push off into thigh-deep bliss and yell back over my shoulder, "Hey, Doug, maybe I'll go first...just so you can see what the snow is like." «

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