

GUIDE

BULLETIN



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IMPROVING MOBILITY
AND MECHANICS

SCOPE OF PRACTICE:
NAVIGATING THE
NEW TERRAIN

THE LOGISTICS
OF INJURY

DOUG ROBINSON:
THE GUIDING LIFE



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On the cover: Doug Patinkin sending the V-Pitch, located on the Upper Exum Ridge of the Grand Teton. PHOTO BY MIKE POBORSKY (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)

This page: Taken while guiding a client on the Aiguille d'Entrèves Traverse on the border of the French and Italian Alps. PHOTO BY JONATHAN SPITZER (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)



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EFFECTIVE JULY 1, OVER 40 YEARS FROM THE INCEPTION OF OUR association, the AMGA Scope of Practice (SOP) went into effect! In a broader guiding and outdoor-education industry with few standards, this is a significant step for our organization. SOP brings us in line with the standards of the other twenty-six members of the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations. It solidifies our role, identified in our mission, to be the leader in education and standards for professional guides and climbing instructors. For the first time, a client can hire an AMGA member and be assured that their guide or instructor has been vetted to international standards.

A line of recent AMGA presidents—Marc Chauvin, Rob Hess, and Angela Hawse—has been resolute in making SOP a reality, as has our technical director, Dale Remsberg. Many others — including board members, hundreds of AMGA members who have weighed in on various SOP details, and all the Accredited Businesses that supported this step—have helped bring us to this day. Although it took longer to implement than many dedicated members would have liked (and probably comes too soon for a few others), Scope of Practice has arrived.

While Scope of Practice is here and we should celebrate this, it will always be a work in progress and will take years to solidify. Part of SOP is documentation and rules, but ultimately most of it is about people.

The AMGA must provide our members with increasingly high-quality training and support. We should all educate our fellow members and clients, as well as guides and instructors who are not yet a part of the AMGA. Collectively, we need to hold our fellow members accountable to these new standards.

Finally, we need to continue to iterate upon and evolve our approach to SOP and to guide- and climbing-instructor education. Your engagement in this ongoing process is encouraged and appreciated!

Hope to see you in the mountains,

Alex Kosseff
AMGA Executive Director
alex@amga.com

PHOTO BY PATRICK ORMOND (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)



CLIMBING SINCE 1989



THE NEW KONSEAL HARNESS AND PACK



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Ian Nicholson — **EQUIPPED** — Seattle, Washington

Ian decided he wanted to be a Mountain Guide at age 15 and started guiding at age 20. His love for climbing and skiing transferred over well to helping people achieve their goals in the outdoors. He is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide and has been guiding for the last 17 years.



Dr. Matthew Smith — **MOUNTAIN MEDICAL** — Boulder, Colorado

Co-founder of Revo Physiotherapy and Sports Performance, Matthew is enthusiastic about his work as a physical therapist and is constantly working to progress his knowledge base in the field of orthopedic/sports rehabilitation. Aside from being a husband and a father, Matthew is passionate about sports and helping patients regain their highest performance level.



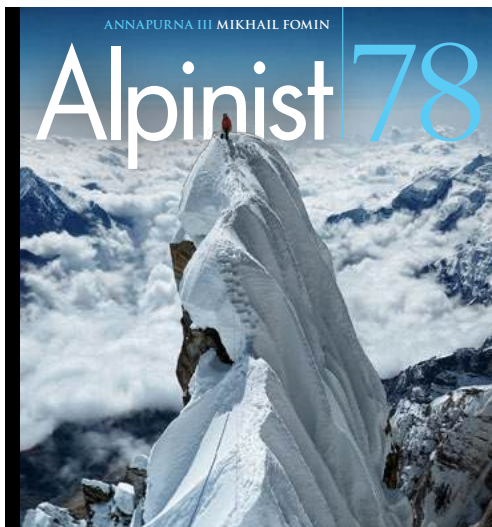
Dylan Taylor — **SCOPE OF PRACTICE** — Chamonix, France

Dylan is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide living in Chamonix, France. After 22 years of guiding on a handful of continents and 10 years of instructing for the AMGA, he stays busy and often looks forward to fun Mediterranean adventures in the off-season with his partner, Marine, and their cat, Jonesy.



Doug Robinson — **THE GUIDING LIFE** — Bishop, California

Doug is an AMGA Rock & Alpine Guide, and was also the AMGA's first president. His 2013 book, *The Alchemy of Action*, shares stories of climbing and guiding that illustrate the revelation that psychedelic hormones produced by our brains are behind the high that climbers feel from surging upward over stone. Doug is working on two FAs on Temple Crag in the Palisades, Sierra Nevada, California.



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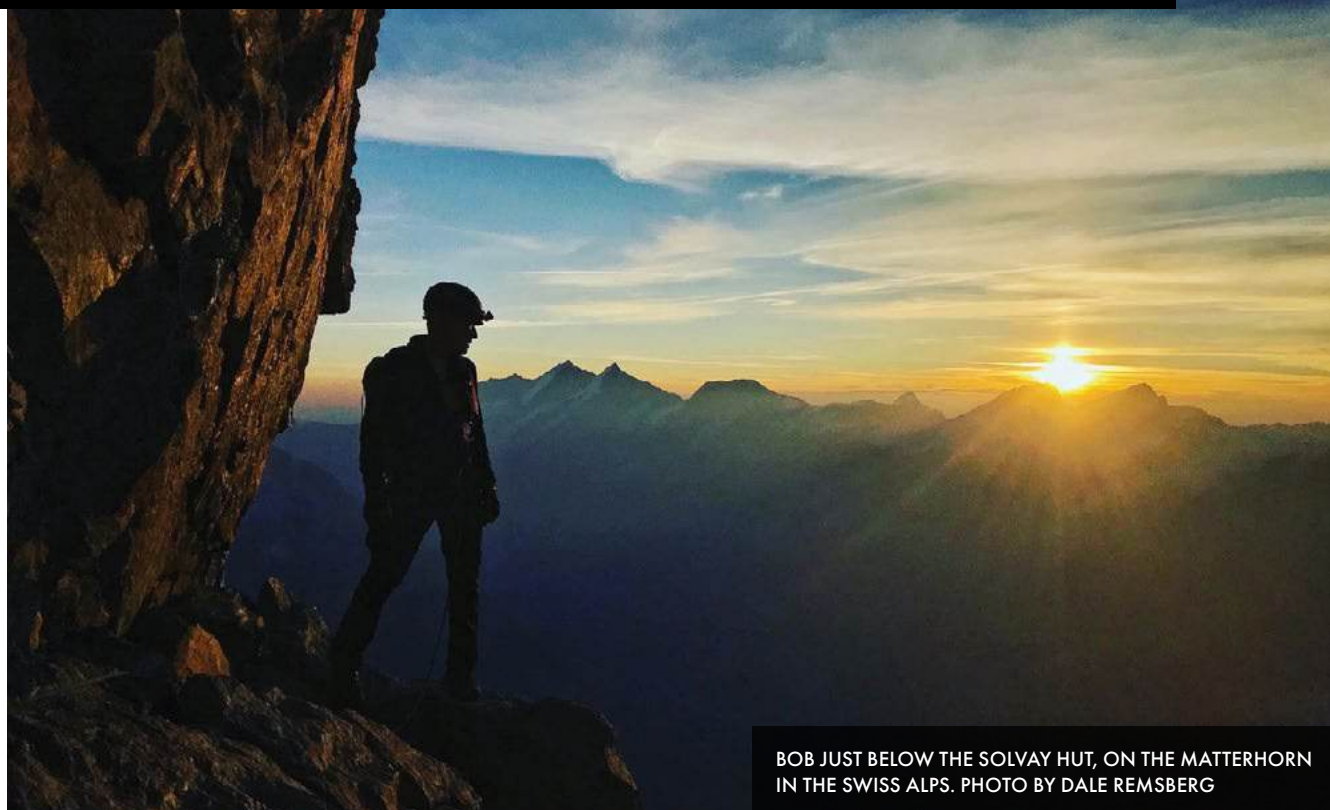
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BEST. CLIENT. EVER.

Clients come and go in every guide's life, leaving some sort of mark or influence. These connections define our industry, and the strongest bonds forge mutual growth. The lessons learned can be as vast as the landscapes we explore, and can last a lifetime. In this issue's photo essay, we take a bow to four favorite clients who forever changed their guides' lives.



BOB JUST BELOW THE SOLVAY HUT, ON THE MATTERHORN
IN THE SWISS ALPS. PHOTO BY DALE REMSBERG

THE BOBSTER

By Dale Remsberg

As the guide, we are often the teacher. However, sometimes we may find the relationship is reciprocal—that is to say, we can learn as much from the client as they can learn from us. This is the lesson that Bob, a retired military veteran whom I affectionately refer to as “The Bobster,” has taught me throughout the years. From him, I have learned a great deal about humility, patience, and most certainly kindness.

In our time together, one of the most memorable experiences was the training and determination required for Bob to summit the Matterhorn—a feat that took three seasons and a massive amount of patience. Bob carried a calm aura throughout, and never let stress run the show. Ultimately, The Bobster topped out on the Horn at the mature age of 74.

While the experience was one for the books, it's Bob's character and attitude that make these moments so special. To have his trust and the opportunity to lead him around on mountain adventures is an honor and one of the greatest compliments.

Dale Remsberg — Lafayette, Colorado

Dale is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide who serves as the Technical Director of the AMGA. He prides himself in high-end skills in every kind of terrain. Whatever his endeavor, his quiet determination and love of the mountains will generally ensure success, all with a smile on his face.

THE DISCOVERER

By Steve Banks

When I first met Jon Wolff, I was a young guide just starting out with Crested Butte Mountain Guides. He and his son, Joe, came to CB for a three-day hut trip. He was an interesting guy—slightly disheveled and a hot mess, but incredibly kind, brilliant, and fun to be around (sort of the “nutty professor” type).

Over the years, I had the privilege of guiding Jon and his friends and family all over the world. I benefited greatly from Jon’s encouragement and grace. He allowed me to develop my skills as an IFMGA Guide, and though he wasn’t the best skier out there, he sure knew how to have the most fun!

Off the mountain, Jon was a skilled pediatrician and voracious medical researcher. He founded several medical-research companies, and his work eventually became a key component of the COVID-19 vaccine development.

Unfortunately, Jon did not see the full impact of his life’s work, as he passed away suddenly from an aggressive cancer at the beginning of the pandemic. In one of our final conversations, he voiced how I had changed his life by reintroducing him to the outdoors, to which I replied that he had changed my life. And that is exactly what great clients do. I am forever grateful for our time together.

Steve Banks – Crested Butte, Colorado

Steve is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide based in the Colorado Rockies. He chases powder from Japan to Revelstoke in the winter, and guides peaks around the world from the Alps to the Cascades in the summer. Steve is also a member of the AMGA Instructor Team.



STEVE AND JON AFTER A CLIMB ON SPRING CREEK TOWER IN ALMONT, CO. PHOTO BY STEVE BANKS



DIANE AND ELAINA PRACTICING WALL SKILLS AT MT. CHARLESTON, NV. PHOTO BY ELAINA ARENZ

THE COMMANDER

By Elaina Arenz

I met Diane in 2015. She had just retired from her lifelong career in the U.S. Navy and had sold her home and many of her possessions, electing to live an adventurous life on the road in her truck and camper.

On our first day out together, we climbed the Great Red Book, a multi-pitch route in Red Rock. Diane was hard to read and held an intense stare, but once she cracked a smile, her face lit up with a roadmap of happiness. That day was pivotal for her, and it was the first of many adventures to come, including an opportunity to establish her own route. She named it the Commander's Quest, in honor of her service in the Navy and her never-ending search for adventure.

Diane is filled with gratitude and is always appreciative of our time together. She's incredibly inquisitive, and is always hungry to learn and grow. It's been an honor to work with her, and to take her from a basic skill level to that of an experienced and competent mountain partner.

Elaina Arenz – Las Vegas, Nevada

Elaina is an AMGA Rock Guide, Apprentice Alpine Guide, and SPI Provider Trainer who splits her time between Nevada and West Virginia. She is the owner of New River Mountain Guides, on the AMGA Board of Directors, and participates in numerous AMGA committees. When she's not climbing, she's out exploring on her dirt bike with her partner, and giving belly scratches to her pup.

THE EMPOWERER

By Nancy Bockino

Connection and love are two powerful forces. Jackie and I met in 2019 when I was assigned to be her guide for her second attempt on the Grand Teton.

Having lived in Colorado for 40 years, hiking nearly every day, Jackie was no stranger to the mountains. Our summit of the Grand was the first of many blissful days shared in the alpine.

Over the years, we've built a foundation that allows for moments of discomfort to become empowering opportunities for growth. Her strength, courage, and overall commitment to the mountains give us the chance to share the best days of our lives together, even when the objective is difficult or life simply deals a challenging hand. She's taught me how to truly support progression—and the value in understanding that each skill has a gradient of mastery. Thank you, Jackie: You are my inspiration and one of my best friends.

Nancy Bockino — Wilson, Wyoming

Nancy has spent 22 years in the Tetons, working as a guide and avalanche forecaster for Exum and an ecologist conserving whitebark pine. Nancy has a teaching certificate and an M.S. in ecology, and is an AMGA Apprentice Alpine, Apprentice Rock, and Apprentice Ski Guide. Sharing the bliss she finds in the mountains is her passion.



THEY'D RATHER BE IN THE MOUNTAINS: PORTRAIT OF NANCY AND JACKIE BY COLIN WANN @CREATIVEASCENTS

A GOOD CLIENT...

By Paul Koubek

Understands that plans change. Guided climbing and skiing fall into the category of adventure travel for a reason. A good client rolls with the changes—the art of communicating these changes is part of the art of guiding.

Gives the guide the reins. A good client wants me to be responsible for major decisions and understands that I am not perfect. They may want background and insight into my decision-making, but they trust me implicitly—a responsibility I do not take lightly!

Pays well—and tips better. A good client understands, respects, and appreciates that this is what I do for a living (and what I've done for more than 25 years). There seems to be an inverse ratio between how difficult the client is to please versus how well they tip (i.e., the easiest clients to work with can be the best tipplers, while the highest-maintenance clients may stiff you in the end). Plan and act accordingly!

Is eager to learn. A good client is keen to learn skills pertinent to the type of adventure we are on—and beyond.

Pays attention to the gear list. A good client cares about prepping before the trip and shows up with the appropriate gear.

Is easy to feed. A good client clearly communicates their dietary preferences and needs.

Likes a little funk and local flavor. A good client has a desire to see new things and experience new people and places. These kinds of partners get the most out of their adventure and are the most joyous to travel with.

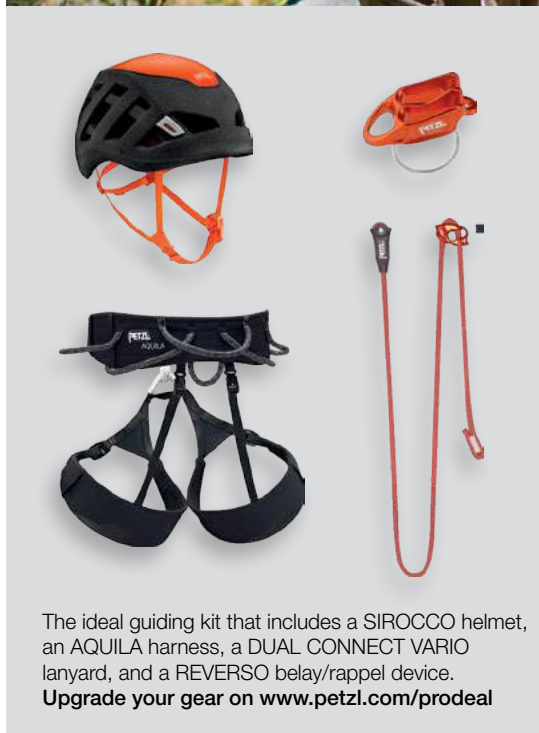
And remember: A skilled guide can turn a good client into an excellent client.

Paul Koubek — Yosemite, California

Paul is an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide based in Yosemite, California. He is a member of the AMGA Board of Directors and the Instructor Team. He travels all over the world guiding. When not guiding, he enjoys paddleboarding with his wife, riding his bike, swimming, and playing a mediocre game of tennis.



A FINE EXAMPLE OF AN AMAZING CLIENT: DR. BREEZY ON THE PENULTIMATE PITCH OF THE NOSE. PHOTO BY PAUL KOUBEK



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Scope of Practice: **Navigating the New Terrain**

Scope of Practice affects guides, owners, and even our clients in myriad ways. Delve into the nuances of how SOP affects members and our community-at-large.

By Dylan Taylor



AMGA BIPOC SINGLE PITCH INSTRUCTOR COURSE. PHOTO BY TRUC ALLEN



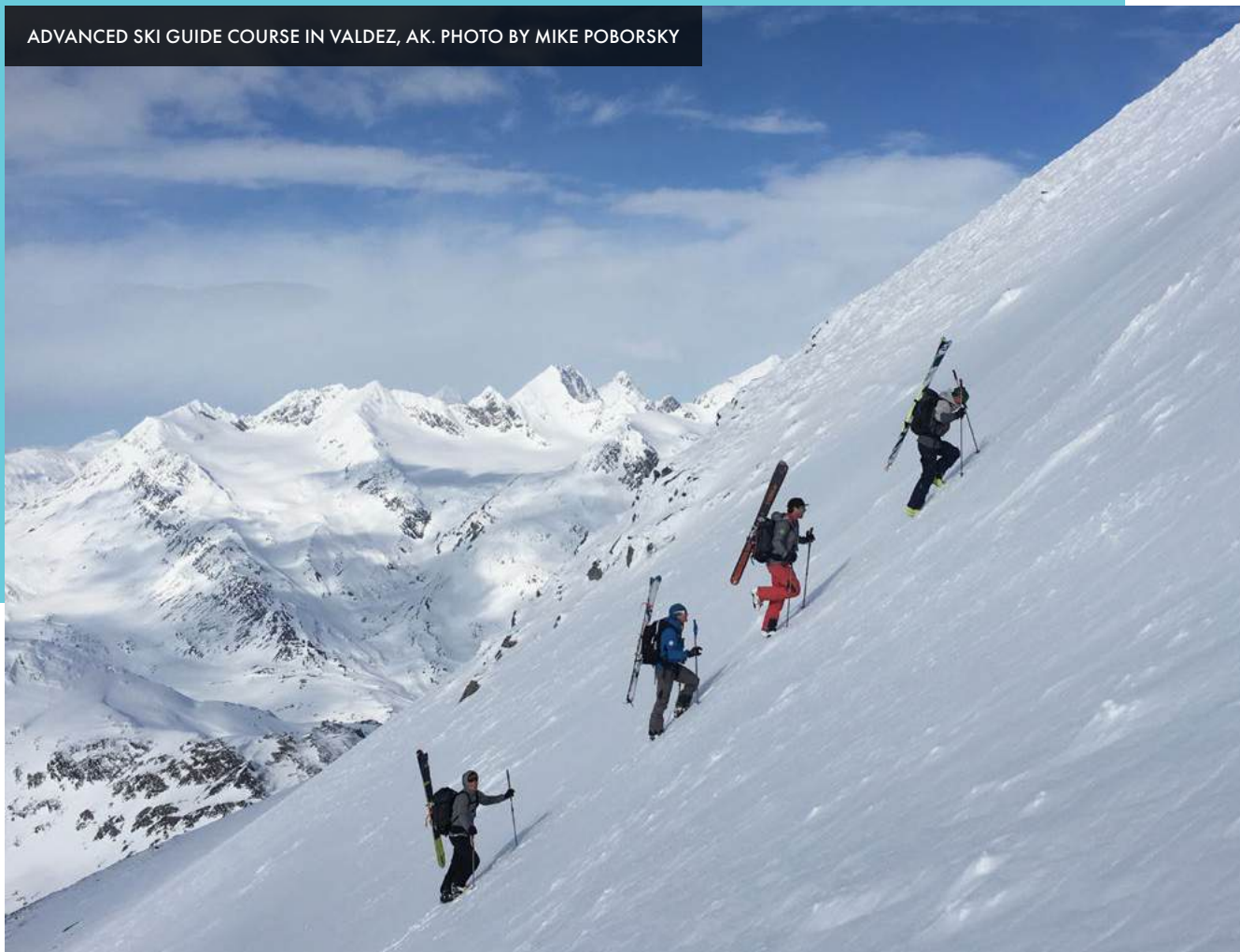
AS OF JULY 1, 2022, the AMGA Scope of Practice (SOP) requires AMGA professional members and Accredited Businesses to guide and instruct in terrain in which they are trained and certified. Since board approval in 2017, the SOP has served as an “educational” document to inform terrain-related choices for members and businesses. With five years to prepare behind us, SOP compliance is now mandatory.

The goal of the SOP is to ensure that guides are trained (and/or certified) in the terrain in which they’re working. This goal supports the AMGA’s mission to be the leader in education, standards, and advocacy for professional guides and climbing instructors. The outcomes are designed to have a positive impact on guides and guide services—and to offer a better service for every client who hires us.

Full bias disclosure here: I’m an American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide, AMGA Instructor Team Member, former board member, and cheese-loving resident of the French Alps; I’m in support of the AMGA’s efforts to mandate SOP, as I think high standards are good for business, as well as client and guide safety. At its core, Scope of Practice establishes a professional standard for the guiding profession. Part of being a professional association is establishing as a standard the expectation that members have been appropriately trained or certified for the terrain they work in.

The 43-year history of the AMGA has not been free of debate. SOP is among the most divisive of topics.

The AMGA has found that while some of the resistance to SOP requires research and a nuanced approach to figuring out a solution, a significant amount of pushback comes from a lack of clear understanding of the document and how it will affect membership.



On one side, there are guides pushing for high standards and a strict interpretation of SOP. This perspective is seen as respecting the effort that certified guides have invested in their training and careers. Why go through the effort of training and certification if the value of SOP is diminished by low standards and/or broad interpretation of SOP variances?

On the opposite side, guides with lower levels of training and certification (and business owners striving to fill guide rosters for busy seasons), see the SOP as an obstacle to career progress and adequate staffing. Many of these guides and guide-service operators have made guiding a central part of their careers and have chosen not to seek AMGA training or certification because of cost, relevancy to the terrain they work in, or difficult prerequisites. Some seasoned guides have balked at the expense and potential disruption that training could foist upon their financial and family situations.

Most members of the above two camps have agreed to compromises in order to make the SOP better for everyone. As a result, guides get valuable training from a professional organization that advocates for their efforts, and guide-service owners benefit from the training their staff receives. But there are still concerns from both sides.

An AMGA Accredited Business Weighs In

I get it. So does Jason Martin, AMGA Rock & Alpine Guide and owner/executive director of the American Alpine Institute (AAI), an AMGA Accredited Business, who told me that they are trying very hard to meet SOP but have had a difficult time finding qualified staff who meet SOP criteria for both alpine-guiding programs and avalanche education. Jason expressed that “more direction is needed” when it comes to laying out how SOP will affect Recreational Avalanche Training instructors. Regarding alpine-guide staffing, Jason is concerned with the financial burden faced by guides entering the profession in the Pacific Northwest. He used the Coleman-Deming (CD) route on Kulshan (Mount Baker) as an example: “For a guide to work unsupervised on the CD in 2022, they will have had to spend approximately \$4,850 (ASC+AGC), but AAI really needs guides capable of handling the rock-terrain demand as well, which is another \$3,100 (RGC) expense.”

Jason and I discussed the geographical differences that affect guiding in the Lower 48 and how those differences affect everything from turnover to finding qualified staff to how the AMGA’s Alpine Guide track can be a hurdle for some guides who start their careers on snow/glacier but lack

a solid rock background. In regards to high turnover, Jason said, "It's the nature of the business—guides spend a lot of time away from home. We don't have a lot of day trips in the PNW. AAI has gotten much better at retaining guides, but guides generally have less desire to work many field days as the years go by."

On the plus side, Jason noted how the structure of SOP helps to identify staff capable of handling a wider array of alpine terrain: "The AGC pre-reqs 'force' one to get exposure on scrappy alpine terrain, which increases one's ability to manage risk as well as to manage real day-to-day guiding problems." He said that hiring new staff who meet SOP helps ensure that they will be qualified and more adept at guiding the harder routes frequently offered by AAI.

As an employer, Jason shared that he also appreciates that guides with more training tend to solicit more-appropriate future programs for their clients. In the past, there had been a history of some guides with minimal training up-selling clients on terrain well beyond any "theoretical" scope of practice (e.g., a day of top roping at Mt. Erie in Washington leads the rookie guide to suggest to the rookie client, "Let's do the North Face of Mt. Goode next summer!"). Perhaps another way of putting it is that, if guide services can find qualified staff within SOP, these new (but trained and experienced) guides are less likely to "Dunning-Kruger"* themselves into trouble.

U.S. vs. the World

Guiding in the U.S. is unique in that we are one of the most developed, richest nations on the planet, with a century of mountain-guide history in all types of terrain. However, we are generally the least mobile (in terms of non-compete employee contracts, guest guiding hurdles, exclusive permits, etc.) and we offer the least reciprocity to international guides (by dint of labor and immigration issues generally outside our control). Because U.S. guides do not commonly work alongside international guides, we are not well exposed to how guides and guide services operate elsewhere on the planet.

SOP compliance for most guide terrain in the U.S. generally requires a minimum level of training rather than the advanced training or certification that is commonly required in other countries. Many proponents of high standards may find this too lenient. If we compare our SOP with Canada, where there are higher levels of required

*Dunning-Kruger Effect: "In psychology, a cognitive bias whereby people with limited knowledge or competence in a given intellectual or social domain greatly overestimate their own knowledge or competence in that domain relative to objective criteria or to the performance of their peers or of people in general." Duignan, B. (2020, September 8). Dunning-Kruger effect. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [britannica.com/science/Dunning-Kruger-effect](https://www.britannica.com/science/Dunning-Kruger-effect)

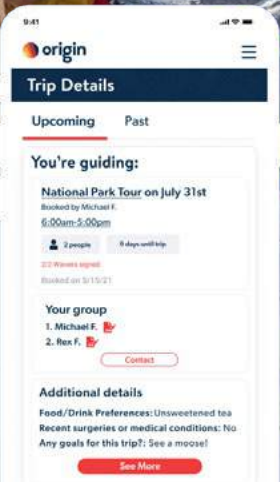
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INSTRUCTOR PATRICK ORMOND AND STUDENT ZACH TURNER (AMGA ASSISTANT ROCK GUIDE, SPI) ON AN ICE INSTRUCTOR COURSE. PHOTO BY ISAAC BERNSTEIN (AMGA APPRENTICE ROCK & APPRENTICE ALPINE GUIDE, SPI)



training in areas such as Parks Canada, or to the strict regulations governing guiding in the European Alps, where “Aspirant Guide”^{*} is the minimum level of training/certification for compensated work, we can see that this is merely an effort to encourage some minimal level of training in most terrain that guides work in.

Guiding Vs. Other Professions

Even inside the U.S., we see that guiding is either not regulated at all or it’s regulated by state or federal agencies. Regulations are typically developed by an agency and implemented through a permitting process. A couple of states require guide licenses in order to work, but these licenses are generally not credential based. If we look at the electrical trade as an example of a mature profession with an inconsistent level of training required, we see that some states (like California and Washington) require technical training and a license to work, but do not offer reciprocity to most other states. Colorado also requires electricians to be trained and licensed; however, a Colorado-licensed electrician has 15 other states willing to provide reciprocity for this level of training and certification. Thus, there is some variability in how different states approach reciprocity, but the requirement to have technical training and a license is consistent. In contrast, the permitting systems that govern the guiding industry typically do not require technical training and licensure.

^{*}An individual has earned Aspirant Guide status when they have passed the Assistant Level Exam component of all three advanced-level courses (Rock, Alpine, and Ski).

One Size Doesn’t Fit All

Variances are the AMGA’s way of recognizing that one set of rules and guidelines cannot neatly apply to every possible circumstance. A common example is an employee of an outdoor-education organization such as NOLS or Outward Bound who is tasked with instructing on rock but does not meet AMGA SOP. Since many AMGA members work with these types of organizations, especially as they are pursuing more-advanced training or certification, the AMGA has established an “educational variance.” This allows the member working in an outdoor-education program with internal staff training and a risk-management plan to apply for a variance. With an approved variance, the AMGA member can work in the approved terrain at the approved educational organization while also remaining a member in good standing.

Looking Forward

Every year we have an increasing number of guides obtaining their IFMGA level, and even more guides are becoming certified in single or dual disciplines—and there are a plethora of SPIs and CWIs filling our ranks. An ever-increasing proportion of American guides is trained and/or certified in the terrain they wish to work in, with numbers growing yearly. Assuming this trajectory continues, the body of certified American guides will be ever more empowered to “steer the ship” of our country’s guiding profession.

It is probably safe to assume that in a decade, any guide on snow, ice, or rock is extremely likely—if not certain—to have some level of training for that type of terrain. We can also imagine the public we guide will become ever more aware of the guide-training and -certification process. In Europe, clients commonly understand what the IFMGA represents. In contrast, it is believed that a majority of the American public doesn’t hold guides to a high standard because the American public is naïve to what those standards are.

The benefits of SOP are numerous, and the implementation of the SOP will lead to a brighter future for our industry.

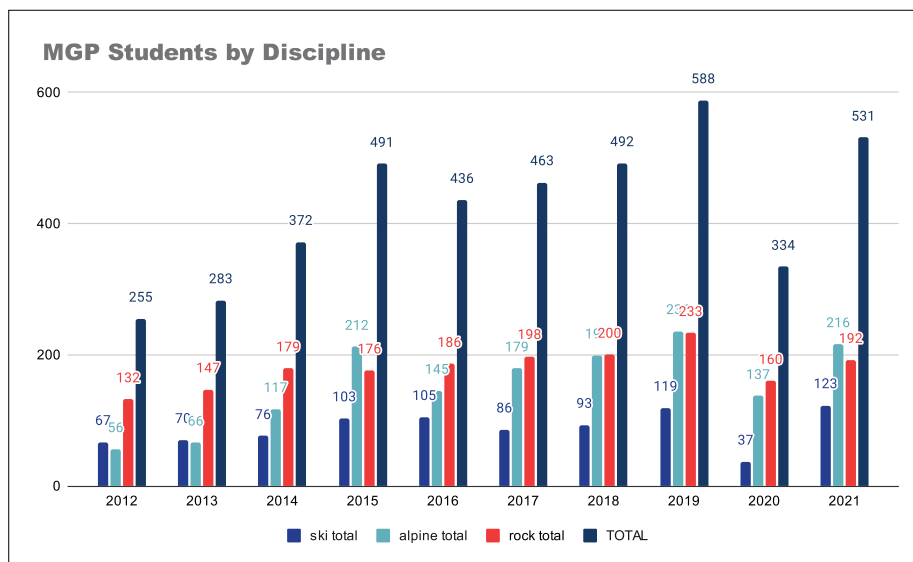


The AMGA has been a training and standard-setting organization since 1979, and after over 40 years of growth and recognition in both the domestic and international guiding and instructing landscapes, our association can stand firmly behind our mission. The SOP will elevate our profession and allow the AMGA to better promote guiding and instruction to the public, clients, land-management agencies, and others in the community. The AMGA believes

that the consistency and quality encouraged by the SOP structure are important to the reputation and growth of the organization and to the instructing and guiding community.

Once the structure of SOP is in place, both aspiring and current guides and instructors will be able to anticipate which level of training and certification is needed for any terrain in the country. Guides will be able to better understand how to develop as professionals and achieve long-term

career aspirations. The structure of SOP will also help businesses find qualified employees and establish clear compensation structures that reward higher levels of training and certification. And, of course, the public will experience numerous benefits, including a higher quality of service and the confidence that comes with the knowledge that a guide has met an industry standard. In an environment that often involves inherent risk, the value in knowing your guide is qualified cannot be overstated. As our community moves toward SOP adoption, we will, above all else, be giving our clients the confidence to know they are in good hands.



The adoption of SOP by the AMGA Board was a momentous and bold step forward. When we observe how guiding has developed in other nations, and how high-risk professions have developed in the U.S., we can conclude that maintaining high educational and professional standards is preferable, and that some sort of contract between member and organization is the only way to ensure that many of these standards are met.

During the five years from adoption to full implementation, the hope was that increased program capacity coupled with adequate advanced notice would allow members to reach compliance with SOP and enable the transition to go smoothly. For the most part, this has been successful. Most AMGA members self-report being able to operate within SOP today. In May 2021, the AMGA sent out a survey on SOP and received 627 responses. Here's how members responded when asked, "Do you currently meet the SOP in your guiding or instruction?":

- › 52% said, "Yes, 100%" they currently meet SOP
- › 29.7% said they "occasionally work outside my training level"
- › Only 8.6% said, "No, not even close"
- › 9.7% said, "I don't know and need more information to understand"

AMGA programs are running full in all disciplines, and many more trained and certified guides are being produced each year. The pool of talent and experience is growing quickly to meet demand from customers and guide services. Soon guide services and the guided public will not have to choose between trained/certified guides and untrained guides. This bodes well for us, our organization, and ultimately for our clients. We have a lot of other huge challenges facing guiding in the U.S. (access for individual guides, international guides, affordable insurance, wages, etc.). But fundamentally, the AMGA will proudly stand behind the quality of training it produces — an enforceable Scope of Practice is one way of doing so. «



AN AMGA WOMEN'S RGC STUDENT LEADS ON CASTLE ROCK NEAR BOULDER, CO. PHOTO BY KAREN HILTON (AMGA APPRENTICE ROCK GUIDE)



Scope of Practice FAQs

Dylan Taylor and the AMGA answer some of the more commonly asked questions from the AMGA community.

SKI GUIDE COURSE IN BOISE/STANLEY, ID.
PHOTO BY CHRIS MARSHALL (AMERICAN
MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE)

Q: Inclusivity and SOP—will some people be excluded?

The AMGA works hard to make sure that anyone from any background has the opportunity to join, be safe, and be welcome in our community. Our goal is to establish and maintain professional standards, while at the same time ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve those standards and be recognized for it. We acknowledge that the existence of standards for participation (such as experience prerequisites and skill proficiencies) can create a degree of exclusivity. As a standard-setting organization, we must be clear about our role in the industry and acknowledge that our obligation to establish standards brings with it an inherent degree of exclusivity. While we want training and certification to be available to as many people as possible, we must also recognize that standards for participation are essential to maintaining the quality of AMGA training and the consistency of a professional standard across our industry.

Because we are obligated to standard setting, and also committed to inclusion, we must find ways to help as many people as possible meet the standards of the industry. To this end, we recognize that not all AMGA members have the same financial access to programs

and training as others. To help alleviate financial barriers to entry, the AMGA in 2021 offered just over \$134,000 in scholarships, including support for AMGA Mountain Guide Programs, AMGA Affinity Programs, and the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Scholarship Fund. We will be continuing these efforts into the future and also seeking to expand the ways in which we bring more people into the AMGA community.

Q: I guide in a very nuanced type of terrain (e.g., single-pitch ice). Why will I need to be assessed at a higher standard than what I plan to guide?

Guides, clients, and guide services have all benefited from guides who are well rounded and trained at a level beyond the terrain in which they expect to spend the most time. The AMGA recognizes its limited capacity to create new courses, but is willing to evaluate the needs of the industry and add new training opportunities when there is broad demand for it. Recent years have seen the addition of Ice Instructor and Multi-Pitch Instructor certifications, for example.

Another consideration: Compare the U.S. guiding system with other IFMGA member organizations. Take France, for example, where only IFMGA guides (trained at ENSA in Chamonix) and professional climbing instructors (trained by CREPS or DEJEPS in Southern France) have the right to take people rock climbing. Even the professional climbing instructors, whose Scope of Practice does not include glaciers or rock above 2,400 feet, have taken multi-week training courses and exams, and must enter the program at a high level of competency (generally hard 5.11 to 5.12 is the barrier to entry). In French society, any person being paid to train or facilitate others in a sport must be trained highly—and licensed—in that type of terrain. This includes all sports, from cycling to swimming to cross-country skiing. If you don't have a government-recognized license to teach or facilitate that sport, you can't do it for money.

Q: Will the SOP increase my wages?

If employers measure value on the basis of training level (i.e.; the guide can be assigned to more diverse and complex programs and terrain) as well as positive reviews, repeat clients, and program development, then the guide seems likely to be paid better. The AMGA is anecdotally aware of many guiding businesses in the U.S. that currently have a pay scale based on AMGA training and certification. Furthermore, if clients begin to correlate trained and certified guides with a higher-quality experience, it will increase demand for trained and certified guides, which can lead to increased prices and wages.

Q: Will following SOP mean I'll have less work?

The choice to participate in SOP is up to the individual. In short: Take the work without training and accept the consequences *or* pass the work on to someone more qualified, remain a member of the AMGA, and recognize that being qualified for a specific job takes time, effort, and some level of review by your peers and by instructors and examiners. There is actually a lot of value in determining which work we may feel qualified to do—or not do. Queue the Dunning-Kruger Effect (and social-acceptance heuristic) once again: Because of the biases we hold, less experienced guides are often more willing to accept more complex and serious work assignments than slightly more seasoned guides who may have experience and insights that cause them to be more cautious about such assignments. In the aviation

world (and in the paragliding world in particular), we often see the 100-hour pilot as someone in the throes of “intermediate syndrome”—someone proficient at the majority of the individual requisite tasks of piloting, but lacking judgment to the point where they may well find themselves depending on correct implementation of those skills in order to survive. For the rock, alpine, or ski guide, it is often about realizing how much we don't know, as well as realizing how much less capable our clients are than we want them to be.

Q: How does SOP impact accreditation?

AMGA Accredited Businesses are required to hire guides and assign guiding objectives within SOP. Some Accredited Businesses have struggled with staffing enough guides who can operate within SOP, and this creates the moral dilemma of whether the guide service should sacrifice work in order to operate within SOP, or hire/staff outside of SOP and accept the potential consequences of losing accreditation. From my Euro-side of the pond, the desire to adjust or lower standards in order to run the trip seems unwise and unsustainable, although I do understand the guide service's point of view on some guides who may be qualified for the work they are employed to do. The good news is that many of these guides are considered “tenured”^{*} on the basis of having guided since prior to 2008.

Q: I volunteer for a local climbing club. Does SOP apply to me?

Short answer is no: The SOP does not apply to individuals who are volunteering their time as a climbing guide or instructor. If there is some exchange of money for goods or services, or the typical employment or independent-contractor relationship, that is considered a professional work commitment—and then yes, the individual will be held to the SOP. Despite the fact that SOP does not apply to a volunteer situation, any volunteer should carefully consider the risks of acting in a leadership role in terrain they are not trained for. To address this consideration, the AMGA would encourage volunteers to work within their scope and consider additional training even if it is not required. «

^{*}A Tenured Guide is a Guide working for an AMGA accredited business who was hired by that business before January 1, 2008, and who has continued to work for an accredited business since that date. A Tenured Guide who accepts work with a different accredited business is only tenured in similar terrain to that which they guided in previously. Tenured Guides are exempted from this SOP, but, as identified below, are encouraged to engage in the Supervision and Mentoring of Guides in training. Tenured Guide status as described applies only within the AMGA accredited business employing that Guide.



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INJURY PREVENTION FOR GUIDES

A step-by-step process to understanding and improving mobility and mechanics

By Dr. Matthew J. Smith, PT, DPT, CSCS, USAW

Editor's note: *Formerly known as our "Ask Alan" department, Mountain Medical is an opportunity to learn about medical issues facing guides directly from a physician, guide, or professional who works in the medical world.*

PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE. We all know it. However, when it comes to body maintenance, we tend to be terrible at execution. We do things every day for the sole purpose of prevention—we brush our teeth, wear seat belts, wear helmets, eat (or at least try to eat) healthy foods; yet when it comes to preventing injury from an athletic standpoint...we fail miserably.

For the majority of us, it takes an ache, pain, or recurring niggle to bring attention to our athletic bodies. The bad news is that pain (especially in endurance sports) is often a delayed indicator. By the time something actually hurts, there has already been an underlying process that can be damaging. The good news is that a large body of scientific research lets us predict non-contact injuries with moderate certainty. So what does this look like, and where do we start?

Mobility. The unfortunate truth is that most people have terrible mobility, and a lot of it comes down to posture. Perhaps at this very moment you are sitting hunched over? Our bodies tend to attenuate to the positions in which we spend the most time. For most of us, that means limited mobility in our hips (a product of sitting most of the day) as well as in our thoracic spines (the chunk of your spine between your shoulder blades). Then, we turn around and ask our body to do these incredible feats, under physical and psychological stress, without the appropriate architectural stability—a recipe for disaster.

Mechanics. We can't talk about mobility unless we mention mechanics. The basis of good mechanics is to use our body in ways for which it's been structurally designed. Use your joints in their anatomically engineered way. Good mechanics decrease injury and increase efficiency, which means you will literally be able to get farther faster.

THE CULPRIT AND PREVENTION

Back Pain

Everyone either gets it or knows someone who gets it. Packs can be heavy; terrain is uneven and sometimes unstable. Because of this, our spines may suffer greatly. Our spines are designed with natural curves, which create a vertical column able to withstand force in many directions. Like all

structures, this column has "tolerances," and when we breach these tolerances, we start to experience pain.

So, what is going on, and how do we prevent back pain? Well, a lot of that back pain can be linked to poor hip mobility, which changes the angle and position of your pelvis. Imagine trying to stack Jenga blocks on a 45-degree slanted table—you will only get so far, and the structure will be unstable at best. That slanted table is your pelvis: angled forward, tightened down by the taut ropes of your hip flexors and hip capsule. How do we fix this tightness and instability?

Solution: In order to prevent back pain and tightness in the hips, we need to stretch. We should take a *mandatory* 2-minute hiatus from our busy lives to stretch our hips *every day* in order to alleviate some of these issues.



PROPER FORM FOR A COUCH STRETCH.



STANDING PIGEON REQUIRES INCORPORATING A LIFTED PROP TO CORRECTLY EXECUTE THE STRETCH.

Below, I've listed three hip stretches. Stretch for two minutes in each position, on both sides of your body, for a total of 12 minutes.

- › **Couch Stretch:** Hold for two minutes, with a *huge* emphasis on rolling your pelvis under your torso—this part is key. Think about leveling out a bowl of water. Cues to consider are to pull your “belt buckle to belly button” or “tuck your tail.” Less is more; if you feel tension in the front of your hips, you’re doing it right!
- › **Standing Pigeon:** Two minutes, both sides. Try to hang the foot over the edge of a chair, table, bed, etc. to take pressure off the knee.
- › **Long Lunge (Hip Opener):** Hold for two minutes. Pull the “belt buckle to the belly button” and lean into the leading leg. Push the front knee out of the side while trying to maintain a “squared-up” upper-body stance.

Boom, there you have it—hip mobility in 12 minutes.

Knee Pain

Knee pain is the most common non-contact pain athletes deal with. Good news: It's also the easiest to prevent. In talking about mechanics, we must remember that we need to use our body the way it's been designed. The knees are great hinges, and that's it. They move primarily in one plane of motion and are designed to function in the same method as, say, an old-school flip phone. When walking, running, cycling, or loading our knees in general, we tend to let our kneecaps collapse toward our midline. This is the number-one motion

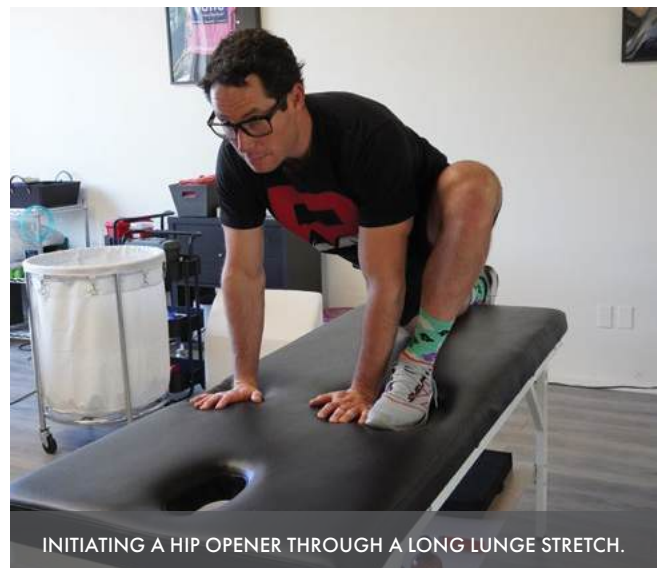
connected with non-contact knee pain (ACL tears, meniscus tears, patellar pain, etc.).

Solution: We should keep in mind that true rotary control of our lower limbs comes from our hips and glutes. If you want to decrease your statistical propensity for knee pain, take control of your glutes, which will lead to better hip mobility and, in turn, better knee control. Movement quality and what is commonly talked about as “motor control” are key. This is literally “how” you move.

One prime example is a single-leg squat. Most of our athletic lives are actually spent on one foot at a time. If you stand in front of a mirror on one leg and try to squat down (think about preparing for a single-leg jump) and your knee collapses in toward your midline, then you are doing that same motion in microdoses with every step you take. Ouch.

What is the best way to fix this? Stand in front of a mirror, or anywhere you can see your lower-body reflection, and practice those single-leg squats until you can do 20 perfect reps in a row. It helps most people to place a chair behind them to have a target for their rear end, and it ensures a proper hip hinge. I prefer to do single-leg squats with my unweighted foot behind me, but do what feels best for you.

Now, you've got hip mobility and great lower-extremity motor control, all thanks to four simple exercises—three hip-mobility exercises and one that cultivates motor control. I'm talking no more than 15 minutes, and in doing so daily, you could significantly increase your strength and decrease your probability of injury. This beats weeks and months of lost income and time spent rehabbing an injury. Give your body the chance to work optimally, and reap the benefits of having a healthy body that is ready for years of use. You just have to do it. It's not sexy. You won't sweat. But you have to do it. Brush your teeth, put on your helmet, secure that seatbelt, and do your damn hip-mobility exercises. «



INITIATING A HIP OPENER THROUGH A LONG LUNGE STRETCH.

EQUIPPED: THE LOGISTICS OF INJURY

By Ian Nicholson

GUIDING IS A PHYSICALLY DEMANDING occupation that takes place in an often uncontrollable environment. If you guide for long enough, the odds of sustaining an injury on the job are stacked against you. The most unsettling part is that the injury, in many cases, may prevent you from working as a guide for quite a while. So what do you do when your primary source of income suddenly vanishes? As one who has recently experienced injury in the workplace, I thought it would be helpful to take what I've learned and compile all the key pieces of information, which hopefully you'll never need!

UNDERSTANDING L&I AND WORKERS' COMP

L&I (Department of Labor and Industry)

L&I's job is mitigating the financial burden resulting from a workplace injury, and is essentially a no-fault injury insurance coverage for employees. All guide services with more than one employee are required to pay into some sort of workers' compensation insurance program, while a portion of every employee's paycheck is matched and paid into a fund that is most commonly managed by the state in which the company is based.

As an employee, you need to be aware: If you are hurt while working, you are entitled to several benefits and to support provided under your state's Department of Labor and Industry workers' compensation. These benefits most commonly cover things like medical-bill coverage, physical therapy, or paying a portion of your lost wages. If your injury

CONNOR CHILCOTT (AMGA ALPINE & ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT SKI GUIDE) BELAYING KIQUE ROMERO (AMGA ALPINE & ROCK GUIDE, ASSISTANT SKI GUIDE) ON THE CINDERELLA TO LITTLE TRAVERSE DURING THEIR ALPINE GUIDE EXAM. PHOTO BY IAN NICHOLSON



is severe enough that you are unable to return to your job, you will receive all of the above benefits as well as additional funds toward training in a new career.

1099 Contractors, Self-Proprietors, and Guide Service Owners

Every person working as a W-2 employee is entitled to L&I benefits; however, it is worth noting that guide-service owners, self-proprietors, or other 1099 contractors are generally not entitled to L&I coverage. This is both because they are not paying into the L&I program and because L&I is designed to protect employees who are hurt working on the job, not self-proprietors. In most cases, if you are hurt while working for yourself, you are not entitled to workers' compensation benefits through L&I.

If you do work frequently as a 1099 contractor or self-proprietor, or if you own a guide service, fear not; you may purchase disability insurance from any number of insurance companies that will cover medical expenses and lost wages

While many medical professionals are aware that working as a rock, alpine, or ski guide is a very physically demanding job, it is imperative that you inform your doctor about the level of physicality your job requires so they can make an informed decision.

in the event you get hurt. There are endless options when it comes to disability insurance, but generally they are broken into short-term (up to 6 months) and long-term (more than 6 months), and are based on the amount of medical coverage and time-loss compensation desired.

THE PROCESS

Inform Your Supervisor

While some injuries are obvious, many are subtle enough to ignore. When in doubt, it is imperative that you inform your supervisor immediately. Even if you later shake the injury off, informing a supervisor early eliminates any question regarding when you actually sustained the injury—and if it happened while you were working or not.

Injury timing is actually one of the primary points of contention among people whose work requires their body. The biggest question with L&I claims revolves around whether or not the injury was sustained at work or on the claimant's own time. For guides, identifying the cause can be challenging because we often climb and ski for work as well as for play.

Opening a Claim

Once you determine that you have an injury that will stop or limit you from working for a significant amount of time (generally considered anything more than two weeks), talk to your primary-care doctor. For most guide-related injuries, your doctor will refer you to a specialist.

That specialist will determine if you have an injury significant enough to require surgery or an extended period of recovery. You will then need to see your primary doctor (potentially for the second time) to have a face-to-face discussion. This is required in the majority of states because it is the doctor's responsibility to determine if your injury is legitimate and significant enough to require you to miss work.

While many medical professionals are aware that working as a rock, alpine, or ski guide is a very physically demanding job, it is imperative that you inform your doctor about the level of physicality your job requires so they can make an informed decision.

Submitting the Claim

In most states, your primary-care doctor provides and submits your claim directly to L&I. Once it's submitted, you are assigned a claim manager, typically within one to 10 business days. Your claim manager is the contact who guides you through additional paperwork. Don't be surprised if they ask for your expected income (typically determined from past tax forms) to figure out lost wages as a way to compensate you while you are injured.





IAN ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY. PHOTO BY ALLIE HERMANS

If this wasn't already obvious, there are a *lot* of steps to getting approved. Once approved, however, L&I works like excellent insurance that nearly every medical provider takes, making the process much more streamlined. L&I generally covers 100% of your medical bills and physical therapy prescribed by your doctor, and coverage lasts as long as you need to recover from the injury. You also don't need to contact L&I much once the claim is approved; for example, you don't need any kind of approval for a specific doctor or physical-therapy visit. Your claim manager will occasionally check in on you to see if you are on schedule to return to work and when your benefits will cease. It's their job to keep tabs on people in the program, and if they suspect you are "faking" or your claim is being misrepresented in any way, there can be serious fines and penalties.

Since guiding is a "gig job," and our income fluctuates so much during the year, the majority of L&I claim managers are more than willing to look at your earnings from the entire previous year.

Working across State Lines

Many guides cross state lines to work, which can make it more confusing to file a claim and get the process started—but L&I is still designed to protect these workers. L&I coverage is most frequently covered by the state where the company is based, not necessarily where the guide lives or where the injury happened. For example, if a guide lives in California but was hurt while working for a company based in Alaska, that guide would deal with Alaska's L&I even after they returned home to California. In many cases, they might get issued an additional, local L&I case number to make doctors' visits and physical therapy more streamlined.

Claim Suppression

Any suppression of workers' compensation or an L&I claim is a crime. This means no employer shall encourage employees to not report injuries, treat injuries that happened during employment as off-the-job injuries, or act otherwise to suppress legitimate claims. If you suspect a worker is being discouraged from filing a claim, you and/or the worker can file a "claim suppression" with your state L&I.

Medical Bills

Regardless of the state where the accident happened or where the company is based, L&I workers' comp claims cover 100% of medical bills associated with a work-related injury. This also includes post-PT sessions, as long as your doctor deems them necessary to get you back to work.

Time-Loss Compensation

The greatest difference state-by-state in L&I claims is how time-loss compensation payments are calculated. Time-loss payments are generally made every two weeks, and are a calculated portion of what you would have earned based on documentation of recent previous earnings. Most states look at what you earned over the last three to six months, with a majority of states paying a time-loss compensation of around 50–60% of what you would have earned while you are hurt.

Since guiding is a “gig job,” and our income fluctuates so much during the year, the majority of L&I claim managers are more than willing to look at your earnings from the entire previous year (based on your previous year’s taxes) and take a whole year’s earnings and pay 60% divided into equal month-by-month payments. For example, if your last three months were a “slow” season during which you weren’t earning much, you can provide L&I with the previous year’s taxes to show a total income that is higher when divided into 12 monthly segments rather than just looking at the last three months.

If you have a mix of income from both employee-based W-2 work and self-proprietor 1099 work, that can affect the amount of time-loss compensation you are entitled to receive. This varies state-to-state, but certainly requires that you declare and have paid taxes on that income in order for it to count toward time-loss compensation.

Vocational Re-Education

If your injury is severe enough that you will not be able to perform your job again, there is a fund for retraining. Generally speaking, there are a number of different ways that retraining can occur, and your state’s L&I has training plans to assist you. Similar to time-loss calculations, these plans vary by state, but generally cover a two-year associate degree at a community college or get you through at least the basic levels of various vocational/trade schools.

Employers Who May Have Cheated on L&I

In some instances, employers may not have paid for some or all of L&I for your workers’ compensation coverage. That doesn’t matter. If you are a W-2 worker, you are covered, even if your boss or company cheated L&I (ultimately, they can expect to face hefty fines).

Kees Brenninkmeyer Foundation

Every working guide should know about the Kees Brenninkmeyer Foundation. This nonprofit is a resource for alpine-industry professionals seeking orthopedic medical care. Unlike L&I, you simply need to be actively working as an outdoor professional and provide documentation as to why you may need assistance or medical help. Your injury does not even need to be sustained while working as a guide. If your application is accepted, the Kees Brenninkmeyer Foundation has all sorts of benefits, including paid travel to the prestigious Steadman Clinic in Vail, CO, surgery with some of the best surgeons in the country, and numerous physical-therapy options. «

Editor’s Note: More information on the Kees Brenninkmeyer Foundation can be found at: www.keesbfoundation.org. For more information on group rates with disability insurance and Spot Injury Insurance, follow the links below:

- › isi1959.com/associations/american-mountain-guides-association
- › partnerships.getspot.com/amga



IAN BELAYING ON BLIND FAITH, EL DORADO CANYON STATE PARK, CO. PHOTO BY SARAH JANIN (AMGA ROCK GUIDE, APPRENTICE ALPINE & SKI GUIDE, SPI)

JAMES ALLEN BROWN

COMPANION & MENTOR

By Dr. Emily Sagalyn Brown

Born in Houston, Texas, James Allen Brown (known as “JB” by many of his friends) attended Texas A&M, where he began working as a paramedic before relocating to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. With his passion for skiing, talent for mountaineering and climbing, and background in rescue, JB discovered the perfect fit for his appreciation of the backcountry. After a summer apprenticeship as a mountain guide, he dove headfirst into the guiding life.

Throughout his career, JB climbed, skied, or guided in almost every significant mountain range in the United States, as well as on four continents. He was co-owner of SWS Mountain Guides and California Ski Guides, and served as president of the Sierra Avalanche Center. JB was an AMGA Ski and Alpine Guide and Assistant Rock Guide. In 2007, he was the recipient of REI’s Guide of the Year Award. Despite his many successes, JB found his greatest joy and



HONEYMOONING ON THE COSMIQUE ARETE, CHAMONIX, FRANCE. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. EMILY SAGALYN BROWN

satisfaction in teaching, mentoring, and sharing his love of the mountains with clients and aspiring guides.

A beloved husband, father, brother, and friend, JB passed away unexpectedly on Friday, May 20, 2022, at age 43. He will be remembered not only for his incomparable backcountry skill and grand ideas, but for his sarcastic wit, warmth, and companionship. JB’s caring spirit and generous heart were felt by everyone he met. His appreciation for the outdoors was a defining trait, only surpassed by the love he had for his family. His greatest joys in life were his wife, Emily, and daughter, Susannah. JB was deeply proud of Emily’s accomplishments and she of his. In the truest sense of partnership, Emily and JB supported each other’s passions and dreams, working toward them together.

POINTS

OF CONTACT

Our world is stone
Shaped by water and wind and time
It sweats when it’s hot
And sticks when it’s cold
It’s the place where we gather
And tape our fingers
And huddle together to wait out storms
Where we’ve learned to try hard
And learned to fail
And sometimes succeed
Learned when to hold on
And when to let go
We’ve made families here
Shared beta
Returned each season, year after year
Finding our wildness in wild places
Spoken its language
Studied its cracks and fissures
Its imperfections and its characters
The moves that make up each route
The climbs that make up a life
The voices that make up a community
The ones that call us back
Home



patagonia



Photos: Ken Etzel, Drew Smith, Miya Johnson. Photo of James Brown by Emily Sagalyn Brown. Photo of Patagonia by Patagonia, Inc.

JB settled down in Reno, Nevada, with his family, but his heart was always in Wyoming. He was looking forward to ultimately retiring on their property, which looked out onto Mount Glory. Every image of JB with his family, whether at home or in the mountains, was marked by an enormous smile that radiated to those around him, and is mirrored in his daughter, Susannah's, face. JB will be deeply missed, but his family and friends will always cherish his adventurous spirit and the unforgettable times they spent together.

A celebration of life will be held in Jackson Hole in the fall. In lieu of flowers, the Brown Family would appreciate

donations in JB's honor to the Sierra Avalanche Center scholarship fund (sierraavalanchecenter.org) and Ducks Unlimited (ducks.org/get-involved/memorial-giving). «

Dr. Emily Sagalyn Brown is JB's wife. She is board certified in emergency medicine and practices in Reno, NV. She has served on the board of the Wilderness Medical Society and earned her Fellowship of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine (FAWM) and Diploma in Mountain Medicine (DiMM). Emily has been the consulting physician for SWS Mountain Guides since 2010.

LUKE **WILHELM**

BETTER SUITED FOR THE MOUNTAINS

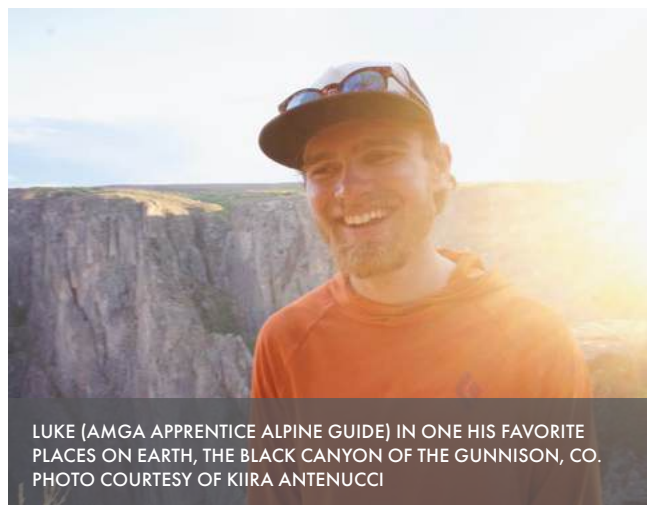
By Henry Wilhelm

For most of our time together, my relationship with Luke was grounded in the shared experience and understanding of brotherhood. We shared an attic bedroom in our home in Baltimore, directly above our younger brother, Greg. We ruined the drywall in our basement shooting tennis balls at each other with hockey sticks. When we moved to Cleveland, we shared time on our high school's soccer field. He was in goal; I played in the midfield. Luke was fearless. He could catch anything.

But Luke began to understand, even from his dorm room in Ohio, that his strong hands and incredible endurance—even as a goalie, he won every fitness test—were better suited for the mountains. So he went to them, first in a semester-long NOLS course, and then by transferring to Western Colorado University in Gunnison. He fell in love with the Black Canyon. He met backcountry skiers and ice climbers. Then, when he got a job guiding Rainier for RMI in the spring of 2018, my brother was unleashed. As a young kid, Luke always bounced between obsessions—first it was sharks, then it was the Cincinnati Bengals. (He finally converted to the Browns in high school.) The West, however, confronted Luke with 10 different new passions simultaneously. His soul celebrated. He had found his place, his people.

In his 26 years, Luke's life presented him with a number of obvious and easy-to-follow paths. He took none of them. He struggled to find the best route. In a way, he was always searching, but, man, did he find a life that made him happy. It's one of the things for which I'll always look up to Luke; it's the thing of which I'm the proudest.

I remember when he came home after his first summer as a guide. His hard-earned sense of fulfillment was impossible to miss. Still, as a brother who'd shared so much with the former version of Luke, I took some adjusting getting to know my new mountain-man. He had a beard. He used expressions I'd never heard (What are the "screaming barfies"? Why do you keep telling me that I'm "cruxing"?). He wore shorts and Chacos in ridiculous weather. He set up glacier belays on the grassy hill in our backyard. He spent hours with a notebook staring at Windy.com. He started two-hour sessions on our basement elliptical at 11 p.m. But, even when Luke would



LUKE (AMGA APPRENTICE ALPINE GUIDE) IN ONE HIS FAVORITE PLACES ON EARTH, THE BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON, CO. PHOTO COURTESY OF KIIRA ANTENUCCI

frustratingly pass on swimming-hole trips because he was busy recoiling his ropes, it was impossible not to bask in the radiant joy of someone who'd found themselves.

While he occasionally struggled to give such grace to himself, Luke extended his bottomless well of optimism to everyone around him, whether they were clients, friends, family, or near strangers. He could find celebration buried under six inches of rain in a tent on Shuksan, in hypoxia-ridden traverses on Denali, or sitting around the kitchen table playing cards with his family. It's what made him an incredible guide, adventurer, son, brother, role model, and friend.

He would always do this thing, which I was lucky to see more and more of as Luke took off in life. It's a great comfort to know that he did it lots, before he fell, fatally, from Colonial Peak on March 6, 2022. He'd spread his arms to the moment—not in the full Simba-like spread of ownership, but in the elbows-bent, hands-open position of a communion—his knees buckling both in excitement and under the weight of his gratitude to be sharing the wilderness he cherished with the people he loved, and say something like "Isn't this amazing?"

It was amazing, Luke. «

Henry Wilhelm is Luke's younger brother. He recently moved to Seattle with his girlfriend, Ellie. Henry writes for the Amazon company blog, spends way too much time following the Cleveland Cavaliers, and remains on the hunt for a reliable Washington surf forecast.

The GORE-TEX brand will introduce an innovative new membrane based on expanded Polyethylene (ePE) in Fall/Winter 2022.

The new membrane will be limited products from select customers and offer durable performance with a low environmental footprint.



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Mountain Hardwear
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affinity programming

2021 AMGA SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

2021 Stats

- › Membership Scholarships: \$51,340
- › Affinity Program Scholarships: \$61,149
- › BIPOC Scholarships: \$22,210

The AMGA currently offers scholarship opportunities through general membership scholarships, Affinity Program scholarships, and the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Fund (BIPOC). Through our scholarship program, we aim to provide resource assistance to support aspiring guides in accessing a wide range of educational opportunities.

In 2021, the AMGA awarded 36 scholarship opportunities to AMGA members. This program offers discipline-specific, skill-specific, and identity-specific scholarships. In addition to membership scholarships, we offered seven Affinity Programs in 2021, including the first-ever BIPOC-specific programs:

- › LGBTQ+ SPI Course by Mountain Hardwear
- › Two BIPOC SPI Courses by Black Diamond
- › Women's SPI Course by Arc'teryx
- › Ascent Alpine Skills Course by Eddie Bauer
- › Two sections of Women's Rock Guide Courses by The North Face



ART BY SAMIE TODD

The Affinity Programs focus on serving historically underrepresented communities that want to learn and grow with communities sharing similar identities and lived experiences.

The BIPOC Fund was created to remove barriers that impact our members of color, including but not limited to mentorship, travel, and program costs. In 2021, this fund was created and supported by our membership, with matching funds from Mammut.

Through our scholarship programs, we hope to mitigate social and financial barriers within the outdoor industry. The AMGA is actively working on expanding and improving our scholarship programs to better serve our members and address feedback. We look forward to continuing to offer opportunities for growth and empowerment within our community.

—AMGA Staff



PHOTO BY TRUC ALLEN

I had never been surrounded by so much excellence, support, and excitement, and it was an experience that I truly treasured. I connected with folks who I hope will stay in my circle for a long time and who gave the relaxing, shoulder-dropping reminder that we've been here, we've been doing it, and we will continue carrying on. Let me remember that and tap into it on difficult days when it doesn't quite seem so.

—Sof Petros, BIPOC Affinity Course participant

STUDENTS ON AN ALPINE GUIDE COURSE CLIMBING NOTCHTOP IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, CO. PHOTO BY MADDIE CROWELL (AMGA ASSISTANT SKI GUIDE, APPRENTICE ROCK AND ALPINE GUIDE)



Without this scholarship, I do not think it would have been possible for me to attend the course this winter. On top of that, I had begun doubting my career choice, as the pandemic clearly exposed the fragility of the guiding life. Not only did the Arc'teryx Scholarship and the AMGA boost my confidence in my ability to pursue my passions, but they have also helped me renew my feeling that I am exactly where I should be.

—Molly Massena, Ski Guide Course (SGC) participant

Affinity Programs Impact Report

2018-2021

AFFINITY | AF-FIN-I-TY:

(noun) a feeling of understanding that someone has for another person because of their shared identities and life experiences.

The AMGA has hosted
14 AFFINITY PROGRAMS
over the last three years.

The AMGA has served
126 STUDENTS
over the last three years



**\$134,424
AWARDED**

A total of 129 scholarships ranging from \$550-\$2,000 were awarded for a total of \$134,424 in program fees scholarships.

This does not include other costs covered by partners such as travel, lodging, gear, and membership fees.

KEY BARRIERS

Mentorship

Access to mentorship, preparation, and prereqs for AMGA courses is limited among historically underrepresented communities. There is a need for more mentorship and access to resources to complete prereq trainings such as wilderness medicine and avalanche education.

Accessibility

Historically, the AMGA had not provided any scholarships for Climbing Instructor Programs and identity-based scholarships. Once students can meet the prereqs for courses, financial barriers can prevent folks from taking courses including program fees, travel, housing, gear, and other expenses.

Continued Education

Once our students complete their affinity courses, they are seeking opportunities to continue with their education and programs. Each student will have different needs including access to continued mentorship, post-course resources, and funding for advanced courses and/or assessments.

To read the full report, visit our page:



1st Women's SPI Course, November 2018

Thank you to our partners:



SCOPE OF PRACTICE

With Scope of Practice (SOP) taking effect on July 1, a number of projects and systems needed to be in place prior to the deadline. In the summer of 2021, AMGA Accreditation Manager Ted Teegarden took on the role of SOP implementation manager. The position has aided in the development of critical systems to support as well as build the structure for the future success of the SOP.

Those systems included, among others, the Variance Request Process, SOP Compliance, member communications and education, and a general public-communications plan.

The AMGA Board seated the newly created SOP Committee, whose task is to support the above SOP systems and structure, and also to process Variance requests that are submitted from the membership.

As the industry moves beyond the SOP deadline, the AMGA office will be rolling out additional projects. Stay tuned for Scope of Practice member communications. For any questions, please reach out to ted@amga.com.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS UPDATE

In the winter of 2020, the Accreditation Department,

with support from the Ad Hoc Accreditation Board Committee, embarked on a two-year project to overhaul the Accreditation Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire, Manual, and process. The committee, with feedback from current Accredited Businesses, reviewed each question on the previous version of the Self-Assessment and suggested edits as well as additions to update the standards to modern industry practices and to align with the Scope of Practice.

The current version of the Self-Assessment will be used for all businesses going through the accreditation-review process beginning in 2022. For more information about the process or to see if your business is eligible, go to the AMGA website, or reach out directly to Ted Teegarden, Accreditation Manager, at ted@amga.com.

CORRECTIONS

In the most recent issue of the *GUIDE Bulletin*, we credited the image on page 2–3 to Ian Havlick, but the image was instead taken by Andrew Councell (American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Mountain Guide). The editors of the *GUIDE Bulletin* regret the error.



DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?

By Holly Barrass

I had finished teaching an AMGA program and went out mountain biking with friends. I was following a pro and got in a little over my head—I went off a jump and landed badly. I rolled over the handlebars and smacked into a tree stump. I broke my right scapula, three ribs, and two transverse processes on my spine. I twisted my left knee, almost tore my right ear off, and had a pneumothorax.

All this happened three days before I was supposed to go to Chamonix, where I had two months of work booked. I had to give back all the money to my clients—about 25% of my yearly income—and then paid \$20K in hospital bills. I'm 80% self-employed, so I don't have workers' comp, and I have a high-deductible health-insurance plan.

I'm lucky that I didn't have to have a bunch of surgeries, and that I have a working spouse. Any day, you could have a career-ending or life-changing injury. Not many guides have a backup plan. I now have the disability insurance offered through the AMGA, so I have a bit more of a backup plan.

—Silas Rossi, American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide and AMGA Instructor Team Member

How many people do you know with a story like this? If you were injured or ill and couldn't work for six months to a year, how would you supplement your income? In the worst-case scenario, would your family be looked after?

As part of our strategic plan, the AMGA is putting additional effort and resources into providing more services for our members. Part of building a sustainable guiding or instructing career is having a plan in the event that you're injured, ill, or worse.

We already have Trip Insurance to cover the cost of your AMGA course if you can't attend; we recommend all members use this for their AMGA programs. In fall 2019, we began offering the opportunity for members to take advantage of group rates on Life and Disability Insurance. Then, in 2020, we added Spot Injury Insurance. AMGA Members can pay an annual fee of \$70, and Spot Injury Insurance can pay your medical bills up to \$25,000, with \$0 deductible, each time you're hurt in the mountains. For all of these insurance options, there are no exclusions for climbing, mountaineering, or skiing.

continued on next page...



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...continued from previous page

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- › Standard issue - Up to \$20,000 a month for business expenses

Note: Unfortunately, at this time, these plans are not offered in every state. We are working to find more options for every state. «

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amga.com/insurance-amga-members

INSTRUCTORS MIKE POBORSKY AND KAREN BOCKEL (AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDE/IFMGA GUIDE) DEMONSTRATING A RESCUE-SLED LOWER, DURING AN SGC. PHOTO BY JOHN BARKHAUSEN (AMGA ROCK INSTRUCTOR, APPRENTICE ALPINE & APPRENTICE SKI GUIDE)





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Sam Saha climbing on the Sterling Quest
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October 4, 2021, to June 15, 2022

AMGA/IFMGA Mountain Guide

Michael Coyle (172)
Joseph Hobby (173)
Kristin Arnold (174)
Kai Girard (175)
Anthony Guagliano (176)

Certified Rock Guide

Benton Mitchell
Alexander Fletcher
Glen Young
Tyler Logan

Certified Ski Guides

John Lemnotis
Kristin Arnold

Mike Elges
Jake Skeen
Zach Husted
Michael Coyle
Joseph Hobby
Kai Girard
Weston Deutschlander
Christopher Martin
Drew Layman
Kai Girard
Chris Ebeling
Sam Roche
Anthony Guagliano
Nicholas Malik
Blake Votilla
Toni Leskela

Zack McGill
Colby Stetson
Aaron Dahil
Tyler Guarino

Certified Splitboard Guides

Joshua Jespersen
Jason Denley

Certified Ice Instructors

Dan Riethmuller
Ted Teegarden
Grant Simmons
Mark Scott



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Skier: Damien Gougey
Photo: Austin Seaback



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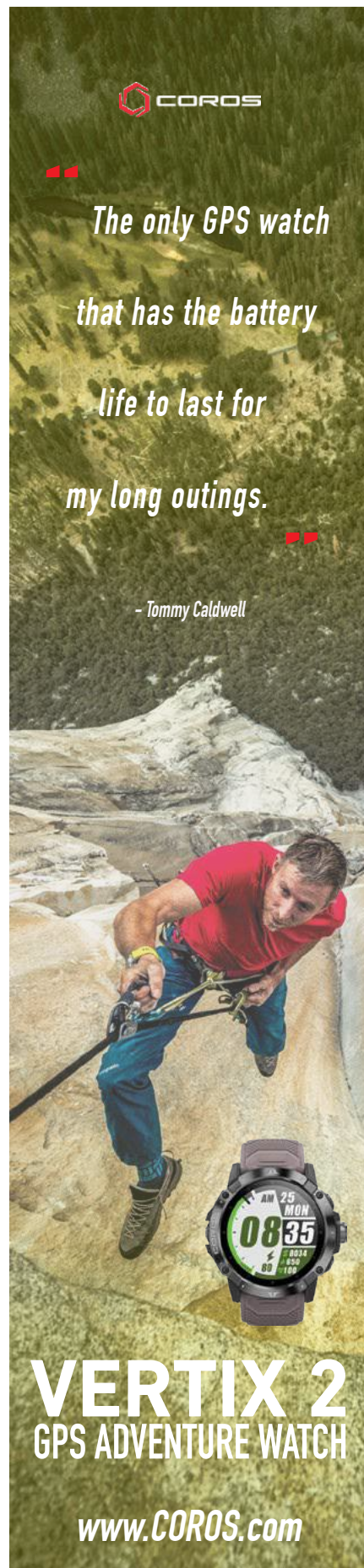
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/

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WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

By Doug Robinson

YOU ARE, OF COURSE. Summit or not, down means down.

But behind that looms a power balance that's not so simple. Say you have a private client who has come to do a cherished climb. They disengaged from a busy life, traveled, and reserved your time. Back home, they're a Very Important Person, with a staff to make things ready. *Your patient is prepped, doctor.* But they arrive in your domain to find their dream climb is out of shape. Or worse, the client is someone who's out of shape and has overestimated their skills. Or the weather is closing in. While the route is straightforward, playing to their expectations of control is going to challenge your finesse. Big time.

Shift to a group setting, Starbucks cups in hand. You've done the "Hi, who are you?" and the "What do you want out of our day?" You've subtly allayed the fear, usually unspoken: They will be exposed as the ones who can't keep up. You're working it because you know group dynamics are as important as the climbing.

Are these situations sounding familiar? I have a nice little tip to offer, one that comes straight out of working with groups of Silicon Valley execs.

In the nineties, I guided for an organizational development company that facilitated weeklong "Teamwork and Leadership" seminars for employees who suddenly found themselves kicked upstairs into vastly different roles—think fast-moving companies like Apple, IBM, and Levi's. I'd set up easy topropes and let the guests feel the responsibility of holding somebody's life in their hands as they belayed. Climbing as a metaphor. Loitering with intent, I was ready to leap on the rope if a belayer froze. The head consultants would then circle up and debrief, incorporating various theories of leadership connected to the rope and climbing. Believe me, I've heard a lot of these theories, and I'll spare you most of them.

The climax of each week was a short climb to a modest peak, each group self-organizing to lead themselves (by consensus) to the summit. Again, I loitered with intent, biting my tongue as they puzzled over the map. Unfortunately, the results were often more hilarious than impressive. One group in Spain came home and created a T-shirt that read, "Climb the Right Mountain." Their company, which once ruled the world of servers, has since vanished.

Then, there was the time I trailed a group of execs fumbling toward the crest of the San Francisco Peaks in Arizona. Their navigational skills were on par but absorbed them so deeply that they failed to notice thunderheads bearing down behind them. As they ambled to the summit, ready to bask in success, I leaped onto the high point (clearly not the safest place to be), instantly shifting into a directive role that shattered their democratic process, shouting, "Lightning coming, DOWN NOW!" and led them off at a trot.

That moment nicely illustrates the most valuable point I got from those years of consultant lectures. It's called the Leadership Continuum (Tannenbaum-Schmidt, if you want to look it up). At one end a democracy, a group led by shared consensus. At the other end, absolute top-down control; you could think of this as old-fashioned "follow me" leadership. As you know, that mode has its place and can be very effective in applying your skill at mountaintop toward a group goal. It makes for many a teachable moment. What it can lack is the individual buy-in you were finessing that morning, still clutching coffee cups. Because we recognize too that each person's ownership leads to more effective learning.

Your guiding hand is on the lever that slides control along the continuum, back and forth from inviting shared inputs to firmly directing, all to optimize, appropriately to each moment, the indelible experience. «

Eddie Bauer alpine climbing guides Carla Perez (ASEGUIM)
and Esteban "Topo" Mena (IFMGA/ASEGUIM)
Cayambe, Ecuador

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