

President's Report June 2012 BOD Meeting

Part 1: AMGA Board Update

Since January

As always, the goal of this report is to take the broad view of our organization, and to provide our board and membership with an update on a regular basis. It has been a busy winter for the AMGA, and I would like first and foremost to acknowledge the hard work our office has put into every facet of the AMGA. Betsy's Executive Director Report shows not only that we are a healthy and thriving organization, but that we are also a growing organization. This growth is occurring in many departments – programs and advocacy, fundraising and marketing...to name a few. I am grateful for the work and value of our office staff, and a huge part of that gratitude goes to Betsy for her labor and leadership in the AMGA office. In my Spring 2012 Mountain Bulletin article I wrote about being inspired by our profession; I feel that our office is truly doing inspired work, and I hope to continue this caliber of inspired work in every aspect of the organization.

I would also like to commend the advocacy work on the Black Canyon issue undertaken by Betsy and Peter Gould. The amount of time and energy that has gone into this project speaks powerfully to how important this issue is to guides and guiding. I believe that we are just beginning to understand the potential we have as an organization for advocacy. I am very proud to offer this concrete benefit to our membership!

As a board, we have found some breathing room after the intense focus on our strategic planning process. I hope that our work in 2012 will continue with the themes of 'effective' and 'sustainable'. Back in October I set myself the task of answering this question: how can I better support each existing board member? The use of the Google Documents Goal and Task sheets for our board committees is one effort to meet this goal, but I look to you all to add other ideas and initiatives to help us be an effective board. I urge each of us to find roles and tasks that motivate and inspire us, and to build tools for success as volunteer board members acting in the ebb and flow of our work lives.

Looking ahead

The AMGA has had an educational focus since it's foundation. Now, as the organization – and the profession – grows, it is time to consider with honesty and clarity how to support our AMGA membership and the guiding community in the US.

As an organization, I believe that we are effectively acting in direct support of our mission statement.

As a board, I believe we should keep asking ourselves the ongoing question: are we acting in support of our Vision, particularly that which says, "...*The AMGA supports*

mountain guiding and provides the services necessary to sustain our profession in the US”?

On the horizon I see issues that relate to this idea of a sustainable profession coming to the forefront of our discussions. As we all know, the economic and regulatory climate of guiding in the US offers several direct challenges to the sustainability of being a professional mountain guide. First and foremost is the permit and regulatory climate, but right on its heels are the issues of liability and insurance costs; of creating growth in the job market for certified guides; and of wages guides can earn in the US (especially when compared to the high cost of and AMGA education). In addition to these contextual issues, we also have the issues associated with the growth of our organization: how do we achieve managed growth, what is our vision for managed growth as an organization?

As an organization we have made great strides in tackling some of these issues – our focus on advocacy and the creation of the Certified Guides Cooperative speak directly to the challenges of the permit, regulatory, and insurance climate. But there is still potential for valuable and important work to be done. We have a streamlined committee structure and a motivated board of directors. I urge each of us to utilize the structures we have set up, and to work together to build our vision as an organization for these ongoing issues.

Part 2: IFMGA Update

Following is my report from the IFMGA meeting in Tignes, France, May 1 – 3rd, 2012. As in previous meetings, IFMGA President Hermann Biner provided a written version of his President’s Report. See the appendix “Präsidentenbericht IVBV GV Tignes” for his report. Here is some additional information from the meeting itself (note that these events will also be reflected in the Minutes, which I will forward to the Board when they come in from the IFMGA).

1. Nepal was voted in as a full member of the IFMGA! This was 8 years in the works (or 30 years if you count the long view), and it was really an emotional moment. There were three Sherpa guides present and Hermann, Peter Kimmig, and Bruno Pellicier pinned them with great ceremony.
2. Reciprocity. Reciprocity had several topics in this meeting:
 - a. Hermann Biner asked me to give an update from the US, and I presented the “IFMGA Update – AMGA Advocacy Director” (see appendix), which was created by Scott Massey. The update was well-received, and Hermann acknowledged ‘the clear will of the AMGA to work in many aspects of the situation’.
 - b. IFMGA definition. Hermann presented the English version of the IFMGA definition of reciprocity:

Conditions to be fulfilled by the mountain guides: valid IFMGA identity card, valid personal liability insurance and valid status of further education (ie continuing professional development).

Principle: The mountain guides is not allowed to hire guests in an active way on-site in the host country. He may not work continuously in the

host country longer than 3 weeks, except if it is about a distance journey or expedition for which specific preparations are necessary.

- c. Peter Kimmig (IFMGA TD) is still working on the document summarizing the regulations in each country for IFMGA guides, and will be sending that out to the assembly. In the mean time, Hermann urged everyone to report to their associations that guides should contact the association in the host country with questions or for clarification. He also reminded everyone to remember in all cases to respect the local customs of the host country.
 - d. Reciprocity for aspirant guides is dictated by the rules of the host country, so the best course is to contact the country's association to learn them. **Foreign aspirant guides are still not allowed in France because there is no legal aspirant guide status recognized by the French government.** Going forward, the IFMGA will be looking again at creating an IFMGA aspirant status because of the work towards an EU guiding license. In all cases, the goal is to have 1:1 ratio of a full guide to aspirant guide (ie a full guide cannot 'supervise' two aspirant guides) and to comply to the regulations of the host country.
3. Subcommittees
 - a. The Risk Management Subcommittee shared results of an accident analysis tool created and used by the BMG (the British). I have forwarded this to the Risk Management Committee for review and comment.
 - b. The Expeditions and Trekking committee met to work on the 2013 Denali Symposium, and the result of that work is that IFMGA is moving ahead with the project. See "Notes from Meeting on 2013 Denali Symposium" in the appendix for the details.
 4. The IFMGA managing committee is working on a proposal to change its governance; this will come before the assembly at the November meeting. The basic idea is to rearrange the IFMGA board to have 5 slots for the founding countries and 2 slots for other countries. All of these positions would be elected from and by the IFMGA assembly (rather than appointed by each country as they cycle through leadership). There seems to be general support for the idea, and they are now working through the governance details.
 5. Upcoming meetings
 - a. Spring Meetings
 - i. 2013 Ski championship will be in Pontresina, CH May 3 -4
 - ii. 2013 in Canada (dates to follow thereafter and be coordinated around the Denali Symposium)
 - iii. 2014 Germany or Austria?
 - b. Fall Meetings
 - i. Edinburgh 2013
 1. TC Workshop Wednesday 21st
 2. TC Assembly and 'political' workshop Thursday 22nd
 3. GM Friday 23rd
 4. Climbing comp 24th and 25th
 5. www.rocksolidpr.co.uk/testing/ifmga2012
 - ii. 2013 Huaraz/Peru, Beginning of November

- iii. 2014 Norway
- 6. Illegal (non-licensed) guides
 - a. Poland has created a list of Polish illegal guides advertising trips in the Alps and will share it amongst IFMGA countries. They will send the AMGA the list and we can share it with Denali National Park as a possible resource there as well.