

**JANUARY 2004**

# **ARIZONA MOUNTAINEER**



*Dave Larimer leads Right Baskerville Crack (5.10a). Joshua Tree National Park.  
Photo by Jeff Hatfield*

## The Arizona Mountaineering Club

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**Meetings:** The AMC normally meets the 4th Mon. each month (Nov. & Dec. meetings are usually the 3rd Mon.) at 7:00 pm at:

Los Olivos Senior Center  
2802 E. Devonshire Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ

(28th St. just north of Indian School Rd.)

**Board Meetings:** Board meetings are open to all members and are held two Mondays prior to the Club meeting at Los Olivos Center.

**Dues:** Dues cover January through December. A single membership is \$25.00 per year: \$30.00 for a family. Those joining after June 30 pay \$13 or \$15. Members joining after October 31 who pay for a full year will have dues credited through the end of the following year. Dues must be sent to:

AMC Membership Committee  
6519 W. Aire Libre Ave.  
Glendale, AZ 85306

**Schools:** The AMC conducts several rock climbing, mountaineering and other outdoor skills schools each year. Browse the AMC website or email [info@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:info@azmountaineeringclub.org) for information on schedules and classes.

### For More Information:

Call (623) 878-2485

Email [info@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:info@azmountaineeringclub.org)  
[president@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:president@azmountaineeringclub.org)  
[board@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:board@azmountaineeringclub.org)

Website [www.azmountaineeringclub.org](http://www.azmountaineeringclub.org)

Mail Arizona Mountaineering Club  
4340 E. Indian School Rd., Ste 21-164  
Phoenix, AZ 85018

(01/04)

### Board of Directors:

President ..... Bruce McHenry ..... 602-952-1379  
Vice-President ..... Jutta Ulrich ..... 602-234-3579  
Secretary ..... John Keedy ..... 623-412-1452  
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Director 1-year ..... Dave Larimer ..... 480-425-9689  
Director 1-year ..... Scott Hoffman ..... 623-580-8909  
Past President ..... Erik Filsinger ..... 480-314-1089

### Committees:

Archivist ..... Jef Sloat ..... 602-316-1899  
Classification ..... David Larimer ..... 480-425-9689  
Elections ..... Dave Van Hook ..... 602-790-6283  
Equipment Rental ..... (vacant)  
Email ..... Jeff Hatfield ..... 480-783-8779  
Land Advocacy ..... Erik Filsinger ..... 480-314-1089  
Librarian ..... Richard Kocher ..... 480-966-5568  
Membership ..... Rogil Schroeter ..... 623-512-8465  
Mountaineering ..... Erik Filsinger ..... 480-314-1089  
Newsletter ..... Wally Vegors ..... 602-246-9341  
NL Distribution ..... (vacant)  
Outings ..... Monica Miller ..... 623-362-0456  
Programs ..... Sheri Kenley ..... 602-242-0504  
Training & Schools ..... Wayne Schroeter ..... 602-402-1631  
    Basic Class ..... Sally Larimer ..... 480-425-9689  
    Anchors Class ..... Tom Conner ..... 480-897-7623  
    Lead Class ..... Mick Strole ..... 520-586-3335  
T-shirts ..... Sally Larimer ..... 480-425-9689  
WebSite ..... Kirra  
..... [webadmin@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:webadmin@azmountaineeringclub.org)

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**The AMC Access Committee:** The Committee works by itself and with the national Access Fund to maintain public access to climbing areas. If you know of areas that are threatened with closures or climbing restrictions, please notify the Access Fund representative Jutta Ulrich at (602) 234-3579.

**The Access Fund:** This is a national, non-profit, climber's organization that works to maintain access to climbing areas nationwide. Climbers can join The Access Fund by mailing an annual, tax-deductible donation of \$20 or more to: The Access Fund, P.O. Box 17010, Boulder, CO 80308, or giving it to the AMC Club Treasurer to be sent to The Access Fund in your name. A donation of \$20 or more is needed to receive *Vertical Times*, The Access Fund newsletter. One can also join electronically at [www.accessfund.org/join.html](http://www.accessfund.org/join.html)

## This Month in the AMC

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- 2..... Who does what, addresses and numbers
- 3..... Birthdays; Index
- 4..... Board Meeting Minutes, New Members
- 5..... Discount Directory; Treasurer's Report; Rentals
- 6..... Program; Adventure Race announcement
- 7..... J-Tree Climbing; Elections at January Meeting
- 8..... Hiking Shack ad
- 9..... Exploring the City of Rocks
- 10... Analogies by Anon.; X-Chalk ad
- 11... Solid Rock Gym ad
- 12,13,14 Ideas on Alpine Teams
- 15,16 Outings; Tri Cam Warning
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## Newsletter

The *Arizona Mountaineer* is published monthly by the AMC. Members are encouraged to submit articles and photos about their climbing- or mountaineering-related activities. Submit items for publication (subject to approval) to AMC Editor, 6151 N. 8th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85013 or through email to [azmountaineer@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:azmountaineer@azmountaineeringclub.org). Prints are preferred over slides. Digital photos should preferably be in JPG format and at least 300 dpi. Articles can be in any standard word processing format. For more info call the editor at (602) 246-9341.

**Advertising** in the *Arizona Mountaineer* is accepted, subject to approval, at the following rates. Personal ads are free to members. Business ads are \$5.00 for a business card, \$10.00 for half page, \$20.00 for full page, and \$25.00 for inserts.

**February Deadline: 20 Jan 2004**

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## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

John Hewitt 2, Rene Rodriguez 2, Marcela Niemczyk 4, Robert Reinhart 5, Lisa Barnes 6, Bill Fallon 6, John Carlisle 9, Jack Carlson 10, Donald Rubin 10, Emily Theobald 11, Tanya Sharp 13, Rich Kocher 18, David Schmal 18, Mick Strole 18, Ken Akerman 19, Jerry Arendell 19, Jacob Guzman 19, Kate Hansen 20, Monica Miller 21, Kenja Hassan 22, George Berger 23, Vicki Kooney 26, Kirra Kurvink 29, Jodie Ainlay 31

# HOT STUFF!!!

**The Holiday Season is  
Family Time — Enjoy!**

**Rest up — Lead School and  
another Basic School are on  
the horizon.**

**But don't waste this weather.  
Get out and climb  
something!**

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## Library

You must be an AMC member; i. e., your name must be on the most current membership list.

The circulation period is one month. Materials are due at the next general club meeting. The overdue fine is \$2 per title per month. Please contact the librarian if unable to return your books and tapes.

The circulation limit is three titles per person. One of these may be a videotape, for which a \$50 deposit is required. Each guidebook requires a \$25 deposit.

## Minutes of the AMC Board Meeting: 1 December, 2003

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Board Members Present – Filsinger, Hoffman, Keedy, Kocher, McHenry, Ulrich, Ward

Committee Members Present – Burner, Conner, W. Schroeter, Vegors

Members Present – Thomas, Van Hook

Meeting called to order at 7 PM

Minutes of November Board Meeting approved

Treasurer's Report approved.

### Old Business

- A. Insurance is current in all policies.
- B. Newsletter – Wally needs articles and pictures.
- C. Documents on web site – documents are in review, not for rewriting but only for correct format, grammar and punctuation.

### New Business

- D. Elections – Don Thomas was presented with a plaque in thanks for his ten years of service as Elections Chair.
- E. Dave Van Hook was unanimously approved as the new Elections Chair.
- F. Rental Equipment Chair – Burner is stepping down from that position due to relocation. Position is open at this time. Filsinger will take charge of the mountaineering gear for the winter season. McHenry will take over gear pending selection of a new Rental Equipment Chair.
- G. Outing Leader Classification – Ulrich reported on progress and Outing Leader opinions concerning Top Rope Outing Leader category. Motion made, seconded and carried to establish the position of Top Rope Outing Leader that would involve no lead climbing. Specifics of this classification will be forthcoming but will involve an application form change, clearly defined policies and a process for upgrading leader status.
- H. Anniversary Celebration – date for celebration set for April 3, 2004.
- I. Center Closure – Los Olivos Center is scheduled for closure from June 2004 through September 2004 for renovation. Several options discussed. Board members are asked to look for an alternate location.
- J. 2004 Meeting schedule and T & S schedule were submitted for reference.

### Other Business

- A. W. Schroeter asked that tabled item concerning publication of schools manuals be reopened. After discussion, motion made, seconded and carried to approve publication of school manuals on the web site

with access for members only controller by a monthly link. Manuals will contain a second level copyright statement and a detailed disclaimer. Because of the difficulty in getting a Newsletter Distribution Chair, suggestion made to reduce the size of the printed newsletter to schedules and official announcements. Pictures and articles would be published on the web site only. No action on this item.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

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As a balance to the above weighty issues — Here's the song parody that people aren't talking about

### Ode to the Cordelette

*(To the melody of Little Red Corvette)*

Well I guess I should have known  
we would top out on the dome  
in a place with no big rocks or trees.

But we learned a clever way  
to tie in lots of pro  
and equalize it all with ease.

And did I also mention  
that we avoid extension  
and achieve proper redundancy?

We placed the anchor right in line  
then we had an awesome climb.  
This little loop of rope  
just made the setup a breeze.

Ah, Ha,  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
You rig it up so fast. Oh, Ho, o, Ho  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
Adjust it like you want then you figure eight it last.  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
Baby you're much too fast. Oh, Ho, o, Ho  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
You're timely and solid so we know you're gonna last.  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
You set it up so fast. Oh, Ho, o, Ho  
Little cordelette, Ah, Ha, a, Ha  
A marvelous technique that is truly unsurpassed.  
Little cordelette!

Words by Jim Watson with apologies to Prince.  
( I never thought it would necessary to apologize to Prince for anything.)

## Discount Directory

The following merchants currently offer a discount to AMC members:

**Arizona Hiking Shack**—11645 N. Cave Creek Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85020, (602) 944-7723. Show your AMC membership card and get a 15% discount.

**Solid Rock Gym** — 23620 N. 20th Dr, Phoenix, Az 85027 (623) 587-7625 Gym membership 10% off for AMC members.

## Rental Equipment

EQUIPMENT	Qty	\$Dep	1-3day	4-7day
4-season 2-3 man	1	58	18	29
4-season 1 man bivy	1	45	14	23
Sherpa Snowshoes	5	50	15	25
MSR Alpine snowshoes	3	32	10	16
Ski poles (var. sizes)	3	12	4	6
Hiking Poles	3	22	7	11
Ice Crampons	5	26	8	13
Ice axes (70 cm)	4	16	5	8
Ice axes (90 cm)	5	14	5	7
Snow shovel	1	8	3	4
Snow pickets	3	4	1	2
MSR Multifuel Stove	1	17	5	9
Haul bag	1	25	8	13
PortaLedge	1	100	30	50
Climbing shoes...			Various sizes	Call

Equipment Rental Guideline: Your name must be on the most current membership list. Deposit required; varies by item; generally \$20-\$50. The two-personal-checks system works best. Advance reservation suggested. If not using the reserved equipment, please call and cancel. Call Linda Locke at (602) 997-4235 for shoes. For everything else, call Tom Burner (480) 354-1392.



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## Treasurer's Report

### Statement of Operations

01Jan 03 Thru 3 Nov 03

Category Description	Amount
<b>INCOME</b>	
Advertising .....	380.00
Dues .....	5,829.50
Interest .....	28.29
Library fines .....	0.00
Merchandise (Tee Shirts & Etc) .....	1,385.00
Mountaineering Schools .....	400.00
Program Income .....	10.00
Rental Income (incl shoes) .....	353.00
Training .....	14,892.50

**TOTAL INCOME** ..... 23,518.29

### EXPENSES

Access .....	137.41
Administration .....	1,554.32
Bouldering Contest .....	300.00
Capital Exp (mntnrg) .....	573.01
Classification .....	475.00
Equipment Maint .....	160.00
Insurance .....	1,905.70
Library .....	0.00
Merchandise Exp .....	2,311.35
Mountaineering .....	72.85
Newsletter .....	3,061.13
Outings .....	80.78
Programs .....	3,820.09
Service/Bank Charge .....	84.20
Training .....	7,004.16
To Checking .....	240.00

**TOTAL EXPENSES** ..... 21,780.00

**OVERALL FOR YEAR TO DATE** ..... 1,738.29

### ACCOUNT BALANCES (3Nov03)

CD Account .....	5,229.25
Savings .....	1,668.32
Checking .....	12,566.20

**TOTAL CASH ASSETS** ..... 19,463.77

**OTHER ASSETS (Club gear mainly)** ..... 7,031.00

**OVERALL TOTAL** ..... 26,494.77

**January's Program —**

**There will be one, but exactly what is not yet revealed to us. (Pay no attention to that distraught person juggling phones and faxes behind the curtain. That is normal procedure for this thankless chairmanship.)**

# ADVENTURE RACE

**Feb 7, 2004**

Mountain Bike, Hike, Kayak,  
Navigate, Mystery Events.  
25-30 Miles at Saguaro Lake



Teams of 3 or 4, open  
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## Joshua Tree Outing: Little Rock Candy Mountain

The Joshua Tree Thanksgiving outings were a success as usual. Dave and Sally went to Short Wall on Thursday, and Rogil went to Feudal Wall on Saturday. Both are standard AMC locations because of their proximity to the group campsite, and their ease of anchor setup. In an effort to get us away from the usual fare, I did the Friday outing in the park at Little Rock Candy Mountain, which we haven't been to for a club outing in several years.

This small chunk of rock sits near the huge Snickers formation east of Echo Rock, and is a short 10-minute walk from the new parking lot at Echo Tee. It is ideal for top-rope outings, since it has an easy lead to get on top and does not see much traffic. Plus, it has plenty of cracks and chickenheads to set anchors from. Someone suggested we get a picture of the setup for the next Anchor's School: We used a few hundred feet of static line to get from the edges of the climbs to the suitable features, and ended up with a nice spider-web effect.

I didn't count the number of participants, but we probably had at least 25. As usual, the same people showed up late and left early, just as on the other two outings. Despite that, we had a great crew of anchor-setters and still had enough people to break down and get gear back to the cars.

For those who were at the outing without the benefit of a guidebook, here are the climbs we set up, starting with the climb at "noon", and working counter-clockwise: *M&M's Peanut* (5.10a), *M&M's Plain* (5.9), *Little Rock Candy Crack* (5.7), *McStumpy Sandwich* (5.9), *Kendell Mint Cake* (5.6), *Squirrel Roast* (5.8), *Sugar Daddy* (5.9), and another climb that I can't confirm the name of that was about 5.10c. (This last route was either *Jolly Rancher Firestix*, or *Lips Like Sugar*).

We had great weather, everyone appeared to have a good time, and no one got hurt (shredded fingers notwithstanding). Thanks to the anchor-setters and to everyone who helped hump gear to and from the crag.

-Jeff Hatfield

## AMC ELECTIONS IN JANUARY

CLUB Elections for the year 2004. A total of eight positions are currently available for nominations. The Following positions are up for grabs:

President	
Vice President	
Secretary	
Treasure	
2 year Director	2 Seats
1 year Director	2 Seats

Even though some of the current Board Members are planning on running again for the positions they currently hold, I would encourage any one who wants to get involved to run for a Board position. If you have a friend who you think would add color, flavor or direction to the Board twist their arm and get them to run. Elections will be held at the January 26, 2004 Club meeting

The only requirements for voting are you are a current member having your 2004 dues paid prior to you picking up your ballot at the meeting. If you need an absentee ballot please contact me at [davevanhook@yahoo.com](mailto:davevanhook@yahoo.com) or 602-790-6283. Absentee ballots need to be received by club mail pick up on 1/26/04. If you are unsure about qualifications for nominating yourself or some one else... Board position requirements and nominating guidelines can be found in the club bylaws at the following link, [azmountaineeringclub.org/members/AMC\\_ByLaws](http://azmountaineeringclub.org/members/AMC_ByLaws)

So come run or vote or I won't have any thing to do or complain about.

—Dave Van Hook, Election Committee.

**DUES BE DUE**



Arizona Hiking Shack  
11649 N. Cave Creek Rd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85020  
Phone: (602) 944-7723  
[www.hikingshack.com](http://www.hikingshack.com)

We're located 1/8 mile south of Cactus  
on Cave Creek Rd.

### **Three great reasons to shop at the Arizona Hiking Shack for all your climbing gear**

1. The Arizona Hiking Shack has **IN STOCK** the largest selection of climbing gear in the Valley. Petzl, Metolius, Black Diamond, Misty Mountain, Omega, DMM, 5-10, Scarpa, La Sportiva, Yates, PMI, Sterling, 2-Cam, Climb Tech, Kong, Trango, Camp, Mammut, Boreal, Pica Mountaineering, and Trango are just a few of the brands we carry. If we don't have what you need in stock. . . we'll order it for you. . . with **FREE** shipping!

2. The **staff** at the Arizona Hiking Shack **are climbers** too. You get knowledgeable, friendly advice on gear, places to climb, and the absolute best fit on harnesses, shoes and helmets. The Arizona Hiking Shack is locally owned and has been selling gear to valley climbers since 1972. We take pride in helping to select the right hardware for your climbing adventures. (Besides most of us are AMC members also!)

At the Arizona Hiking Shack, **AMC Members get a 15% discount** on everything they buy, everyday of the week, every week of the year. Why? Two Reasons. First, we respect the job the AMC does. The AMC not only teaches people how to climb safely, they also teach an ethic of responsibility to the outdoors that is essential to keeping our climbing areas open. Second, you learn to climb in the valley. . . well, like it or not. . . we consider you one of OUR homeboys or girls and simply said, we want your business! Ultimately, we know you have many choices when it comes to purchasing your equipment and by having a great selection of gear, a knowledgeable staff, and totally killer deals, we hope you'll come shop with us.



## City of Rocks, Idaho

If you read any of the climbing magazines regularly, you've no doubt heard of City of Rocks, Idaho as a world-class climbing destination. Every year or so, another article on "the City" will spring up, with pictures of happy climbers enjoying themselves on the beautiful granite formations. The pictures often remind me of the climbing at Joshua Tree, with numerous single-pitch crags spread out across the landscape. And while that comparison may be true, it's where the similarities end.

City of Rocks National Reserve is located in the middle of nowhere. Situated in far-southern Idaho, the Reserve is 170 miles from Salt Lake City and 215 miles from Boise, and is surrounded for miles by the dry, rolling farmland of the northern Great Basin Desert. This is definitely an area you don't run across on your way to somewhere else. The nearest town is Almo, a few miles down a dirt road from the City. Almo's biggest attraction is Tracy's General Store, which dates to the late-1800's, and offers showers, groceries, and a phone. It closes early during the week, and it's closed on Sundays. There is one bed-and-breakfast in town; the closest hotel is at least 30 miles away.

With the absence of amenities close-by, car camping is the only way to go if you're climbing at the City. Most of the 75 sites can be reserved in advance, but they fill up on busy weekends. The camping is primitive, with a handful of pit toilets and a solitary hand-pump that everyone in the Reserve uses to draw their water.

Susan and I made two minor mistakes when we visited City of Rocks: we went during the hot part of the year, and we didn't plan a long enough stay. With over 600 routes (not counting the now-open-for-climbing Castle Rock State Park next door), anything less than a couple of weeks would have been too short. We visited in late June, and although the elevations in the Reserve range from 6000 to 7000 feet, it was almost too warm to be climbing in the sun. As luck would have it, many of the good-looking climbs in the shade were out of my comfort range as a leader, so we were relegated to the sunny crags. And some of those crags required a fair amount of hiking, which forced an unplanned day off one day to recover from the previous day's overexertion. Regardless, we thoroughly enjoyed our stay.

Although the standard guidebook for the Reserve also lists hiking and biking as destination activities, it's obviously the climbing that draws people there. While there are routes of all grade up to the 5.13s,

there are scores of climbs for the moderate leader as well, including a number of bolted multi-pitch routes. Where else can you find 2-, 3-, and 4-pitch 5.7 routes loaded with bolts on each pitch? And when I say "loaded", I'm talking about as many as 12 to 16 bolts on a 200-foot pitch. Sure, it's not the character-building, runout stuff you might come across at J-Tree, but it's pure fun nonetheless.

The granite at the City is the best quality rock I have yet to encounter. I always assumed that "sticky" granite, like the finger-ripping-good stuff at Joshua Tree, was a result of the sharp nature of the larger grains in the rock. The granite at City of Rocks is very fine-grained, and is disconcerting at first, because I felt like I was going to peel off every time I made a move. But it may be even more sticky than the sharp rock at Josh. After the first pitch of climbing, we got used to the rock and learned that we could trust just about everything we stood up on, even when it looked like there wasn't anything there.

There were a couple of favorite climbs from our short visit to the City. We loved a route on Stripe Rock called Cruel Shoes. It's a 3-star, 3-pitch, 5.7 bolted route that is great for anyone who loves long routes that require some balance and good smearing technique. Comfortable shoes are a necessity on this route. We also really enjoyed a 2-star, 2-pitch, 5.7 bolted route on Flaming Rock called Raindance. Again, it was long route with plenty of bolts that required some technique, but was easy enough for a moderate leader to get and on just cruise.

As with the other areas we visited on our road trip, we definitely didn't do enough climbing at City of Rocks. But based on how much fun we had while we were there, and the fact that we barely scratched the surface of what it has to offer, we'll be planning a return visit soon.

-Jeff Hatfield

Dues Be Due — See Rogil at meeting or mail check to page two address. Thank you.

Reaching upward, I find nothing. "There's NOTHING here, I proclaim...!" My belayer is straining hard to see and tries to offer some help, but he is too far away to give any meaningful beta. Everything looks so different from up here, than from down below.

Since I started climbing a few years ago, I seem to be comparing everything in life to climbing, and everything in climbing - to life. The analogies are too multitudinous to mention.

How often is a crux point in our life seem overwhelming difficult and the advise from a friend is as far away from reality as my belayers stance. Until someone is inside of your shoes - how can advise be accurately appropriate, and there is only 1 person that can fit inside my climbing shoes.

It also seems impossible to see future options until I make a move forward. Just an inch or two upward can open a new horizon of possibilities. I realize that where I am, there IS NOTHING and where I must go, at least has the possibilities of something, and that has to be better than "nothing". But I will never know, unless I commit to take that step forward. The present moment will also expire as my grip is calling a "time-out". I really have no other choice.

Moving upward on rock or moving upward on the ladder of life, seems very similar to me. Any crux, brings out my fears, doubts and the most deepest of my denials.

"I can't do this, I shout...!" , hoping for a respite excuse to be accepted.

Confidently, my belayer replies with encouraging words sometimes harsh. A good belayer finds the right ones to say for his partner at the right time. Sometimes, a word of confidence is all that is necessary, and all that is possible - for I am alone in my decisions.

It's nice to have someone on my team, to root me onward to success, someone who believes in me and has seen me do it before. It's a welcome respite for those ledges of fear. It seems that faith, oftentimes, is the only wing on which I have to fly across those ever expanding crevasses of doubt in my mind...

Here's to all those climbers and teachers that support and give aid. To their seemingly tireless gifts of encouragement, and verbal abuse, I express my extreme appreciation and gratitude.

There is nothing more I can ask - for you have already given,

There is nothing more I can expect - for I have already received.

My lesson is complete here, I should now climb on...

Anonymous AMC Member

## Be

## DUES

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### X-Chalk

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<http://www.zen-lizard.com>

## DUE!



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## Join in January

AMC Members always get a 10% discount on ANY membership.

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23620 N. 20<sup>th</sup> Drive, Ste 24  
Phoenix, Arizona 85027

Take Pinnacle Peak Road East from I-17 and turn north on 20<sup>th</sup> Drive,  
find building "23620" on your left and go to the west end

**(623) 587-7625**

*The Arizona*

## The Alpine Team: What It Takes from One Man's Perspective — by Erik Filsinger

I've been thinking a lot lately about what it takes to have a team of folks that will offer the best chance of success on alpine climbs (defined below). I've interacted with dozens of folks on my climbs as well as heard about 10-fold other climbers and climbs. The "team" seems to be perhaps the biggest challenge and biggest unknown alpinists can face. In the little essay that follows I wanted to share my thinking. If you have a magic formula, let me know. I'd really like to hear from you.

### What Goes into a Successful Alpine Team

At this point in my life after over 45 years of mountaineering and over 200 separate summits, I think I'm beginning to finally get a sense of what it takes to be successful on alpine summits. In my experience, my partners have tended to either lead to success or failure. There are some folks I climb with that I know I will succeed with on almost anything. I have also noticed over the last half dozen years, that some folks who may have some "qualifications" tend to undermine chances of success in one way or another. I personally won't commit the time and energy to trips that I don't feel will stand the best chance of success. Therefore I won't do important climbs with lots of folks in whom I don't have documentable confidence. Period. Why waste each other's time and resources?

Of course there are the factors over which we don't hold control, e.g., weather, avalanche conditions, illness, etc. But there are factors you can control, so here goes my very biased two-cents. This essay is also relevant only to the private teams folks like us are likely to take part in. A whole separate dynamic works when you are dealing with the fairly tight and often closed circle of top climbers in any country. They live and climb together. They don't face the same challenges of team selection folks who live and work in PHX do.

**Goal:** To summit big alpine mountains with a high chance of success as a private party. (you can always buy "success" with a guide/someone you compensate in some way...that has almost no interest to me unless I'm the person being compensated).

This goal would include climbs like the major mountains in North America by challenging routes, e.g., the East Ridge or North Face of Grand Teton, Japanese Route on Mt. Alberta, the Cassin Ridge on

McKinley, great north faces of the Alps, etc. -- you know, 50 Classics Stuff.

Yeh, I know some folks will come back with "well, I just wanted to have a good time." "I just wanted to learn something." Fine, learn something on somebody else's time. Again, to speak sharply, I imagine some folks would rather go with a group of friends and do what they can, but mostly to have a good experience, to bring back memories, etc. I guess that is success to them, but I wonder how many in their heart of hearts wouldn't admit that they really wanted the summit, so let's be honest about it. So for what follows, once again, success = the top of the route.

Reliably succeeding on alpine peaks has very to do with the type of outing rock climbers take where they put together something last minute to arrive at a crag with some assortment of other folks and where it really doesn't matter that each person does or does not do on any given day. Success at rock climbing is often just having a good time and getting in some level of climbing. Success on alpine routes is achieving the summit and returning safely. Rock climbers who don't have large amounts of alpine experience may bring contrary customs and orientations to the undertaking. It ain't the same Game. Beware.

**Commonality of Purpose:** Nothing kills success like team members who have dissimilarly goals, purpose, commitment, and the like. Talk openly about it and make tough choices about team based on the feedback. Have you met someone who on a week long trip seems to have his or her interest fizzle after the first climb when you have two more in mind? Big trouble.

**Team:** I'll use this term to refer to the group, from 2 to a few more, who you are putting together to climb a mountain. Generally I would say the smaller the team the better. I actually prefer to go with just one other person. It keeps the focus and I prefer the company. Four may be optimal from a safety standpoint. 1 injured. 1 wait. 2 go for help.

I often start planning with more than just 1 because something invariably comes along and someone doesn't go. Therefore I always end up with some sort of "team." I often do 6 or more of these mountaineering outings a year, so team members come and go.

As a related note, to me "friendship" is not a very important element of team selection for success. To  
(Continued on page 13)

## The Alpine Team *(Continued from page 7)*

enjoy your partner is ideal, and I would prefer to climb with friends or lovers, but I'm not convinced that it is paramount and to start thinking with friends or lovers can actually make team selection difficult and make hard decisions harder, e.g., is my friend in Shape? In short, I have little desire to go and "hang out" with friends in an alpine environment when I want alpine success.

**Success positive energy:** There are certain climbers with whom I just know I will succeed. I'm not sure how to quantify this intangible, but it is real to me. Maybe it's partly track record, maybe it's interpersonal dynamics, maybe it's all of the following factors listed below. For me it is a spiritual assessment of our team. On the other hand, there are some people who reliably never succeed. Talk with prospective partners and in a non-threatening way find out how many mountains they have attempted and how many they have succeeded on. Granted smart people can back off, but someone who backs off all the time on trade routes may back off on you when the wind starts blowing.

**Commitment:** It is important that my partners are sufficiently committed to the climb to make sure that other things don't interfere with the planning, preparation, and execution of the climb. Major climbs probably take at least 6 months of planning, preparation, and execution. Team members should be committed throughout, not just "on the mountain." Think about how the team is coming together during that process and be willing to make tough decisions. It is better to cut out a member early than to "ruin" the chances of success by not having sufficient courage to address the topic.

**Reliability:** Some folks tend to come through on almost each and every occasion to be there and to do their fair share. I know some people are good at their word. Their word is their bond -- keep them! Others are not. It can create a lot team tension if some appear to be pulling their weight, while others are not doing so during each phase of trip planning, preparation, and execution.

**Skills:** Generally technical skills are important, but only within the context of the route. Each and every team member should be able to handle the toughest portion of the proposed route or reasonable alternatives. Period. Of course, skills should be judged in alpine conditions. Tough desert rock climbers may not

handle chossy rock. Maybe have a buffer of climbing a grade or two tougher in nice conditions in the desert. Skills above that may actually detract if the team member keeps itching to do something "more interesting."

That any one team member can "lead" sections of the climb is pretty irrelevant. Most of my 200+ summits I've lead or lead substantially. If I can't go into something thinking that I can't lead everything I need to make a conscious decision openly discussed with the rest of the team about respective expectations and responsibilities. That being said, I think it is all right to bring along a "rope gun" -- just let her/him know that that's what you're thinking.

It's more important to have clearly defined roles that cover the necessary prerequisites for success. You can put together a package of complementary skills rather than overlapping skills.

**Experience/Judgment:** Generally a team with greater experience is much stronger than one with folks with little experience. Without experience, team members will not understand decisions that are made nor will they be able to contribute reasoned opinions. Inexperienced folks will have a hard time with the inevitable difficulties and will be more likely to develop negative attitudes earlier in the process. How to get judgment? -- experience. Many summits, many conditions, many different places.

If you need to, groom your potential partners through a carefully crafted set of climbing experiences to set the building blocks necessary for good alpine experience. Rebuffatt's The Mont Blanc Massif is a perfect alpine course... Anyone interested in taking it with me? Think I'm kidding? Maybe not... What do I need money for when I can't climb any longer?

**Conditioning:** Team members need to be in sufficient shape, months ahead of the trip. This is HUGE. Test and train together. Be tough and ask folks who are not progressing not to go. You are not out to make friends. You are trying to summit. I should have done this more often. This means that you need to see how potential team members do. If they fail on tests, fail them on the trip. It ain't worth the pain and aggravation of not doing so, plus it isn't fair to them or to you....it just ruins the trip. Cut it short as early as you make the assessment.

*(Continued on page 14)*

## The Alpine Team (Continued from page 14)

**Mental toughness:** Alpine climbs are not often that fun during the process. Big routes may involve tough

decisions and tough conditions. Ideally you want to be with team members who can handle inclement weather, bivouacs, route finding, getting lost, etc., with good humor and continued focus. If someone says they wouldn't mind a bivy, and they really know what that entails, keep them.

Moreover, alpine conditions on tough climbs involve a lot, I repeat, a lot of uncertainty. You don't know the exact route. Conditions obscure or limit options. You are swimming blind sometimes. Enjoy it, but make sure you're partners can also deal with ambiguity. Many folks can't.

**Existing Groups:** Don't put your team together from preexisting groups of climbing friends if you want to succeed reliably. I often run into, almost exclusively with women partners, potential team members asking to bring along other climbing partners from their regular circle of friends. It appears difficult for them to tell their friends that they are going on some trip without asking them along. It doesn't contribute the likelihood of success. My advice is to tell your friends that you are going and that you'll show them great pictures when you get back.

In short, I have never experienced a situation where the "friends" do anything but create awkward interpersonal dynamics (preexisting groups within a group) and generally take away from the overall success. It is tough enough to meld a sufficient focus and dedication without wrestling with the distractions and other agenda a subgroup can bring to the situation.

**Spouses:** Whew. A tough one. Send them pictures and call when you can. If a spouse doesn't cut it under the same evaluation criteria and conditions you would use to assess other team members they shouldn't go. Period. Good luck! If a team member wants to bring a nonqualifying spouse, is that team member really committed? It probably indicates alternative and competing goals. Think about it.

And did you ever meet a person who doesn't have something "funky" going on when they are around their spouse? They are a little different, aren't they? Does that help or hinder success?

**Financial Resources:** another "toughie" to discuss, but you should be comfortable with everyone's reasonable expectation to cover their fair share of expenses. Make a conscious and informed decision if otherwise. Get some money upfront.

**Communication/Leadership:** Team members should be folks whom with you can share your thoughts and feelings, as well as being individuals themselves who honestly and openly share their thoughts and feelings. However, I don't think that full democracy is that useful on an alpine climbs. There should be a designated leader and the team should look to the leader to make the major decisions. I like to think that with my personal climbing teams I try to find out what others are thinking and try to allow them to express their opinions, which I do take into account. Someone, however, still needs to make the decision. You can't just "vote" on everything, especially when there are gaps in experience. Not everyone is equal in the alpine world. Go with experience.

**Humor:** I keep seeing in the literature where humor is good. I don't think they are talking about a good joke teller. I hate comics. Personally I'd probably cut the line and the "noise." Just kidding. I think instead they are talking about someone who can roll with the punches and keep a positive attitude. Positive energy anyone?

Okay, so what do you think? Am I full of it? Which points are valid? Which are not? What factors get you to the top and back?

Let me know: [alpine@azmountaineeringclub.org](mailto:alpine@azmountaineeringclub.org)

### NEW MEMBERS

Gary Gerden  
Eric Glass  
Rachel Gross  
Tony Guido  
Kurt Gusinde  
Samantha Hicks  
Charlie Lee  
Melissa Neubauer  
George Vadasz  
Tammy Vadasz



## Calendar of Events *(Continued from page 16)*

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**Dec 27 Ouray Ice Climbing.** Dec. 27, 2003–Jan. 4, 2004. Ouray, CO. Visit website [www.ourayicepark.com](http://www.ourayicepark.com). \$50.00 deposit for lodging reservation, in nice large furnished house retained for the outing. For more details contact Richard Horst (623) 434-4769.

### **Commercially Provided Training and Events**

*The events listed below are provided by commercial outfitters for the benefit of AMC members. They are not AMC Outings, nor are they led by AMC Outing Leaders, though they may be open only to AMC members. The commercial outfitter is solely responsible for all aspects of the outing, not AMC. While, in most cases, an AMC member may provide a service by AMC collecting the names of prospective participants and handling the logistics of out-of-town events, participants will sign up directly with the commercial outfitter.*

During 2004 Southwest Adventures will offer the following ice climbing and winter mountaineering activities to AMC members:

#### **Beginning Ice Climbing and Avalanche Awareness**

Offered January 17-19 (MLK Weekend) Minimum number of participants: 4 (AMC or Other).

Registration Dead lines: 30 days before course start date. Cost: \$138 plus equipment rentals for Ice Portion, plus \$55 for optional Avalanche Awareness Prerequisite: Basic rock climbing

#### **Avalanche Awareness**

1/19, 2/16 Registration Dead lines: 30 days before course start date. Cost: \$55 plus equipment rentals

Prerequisite: None

#### **Advanced Ice climbing**

Dates: 2/14 to 2/16 (President's Day Weekend) Registration Dead lines: 30 days before course start date.

Cost: \$150 plus equipment rentals for ice portion, plus \$55 for optional Avalanche Prerequisite: Basic ice climbing course

#### **Multi-pitch ice Climbing**

Dates: 3/13 and 3/14 Registration Dead lines: 30 days before course start date. Cost: \$260 for both days. \$210 for second day only. Prerequisite: Advance ice climbing course and Avalanche awareness

In addition, arrangements can be made for guided Winter Mountaineering and for Level One Avalanche Certification class.

To sign up or for more information contact Erik Filsinger at [smorefil@aol.com](mailto:smorefil@aol.com).

## **Tri Cam Defect Notice**

CAMP USA has entered into a voluntary recall for 1.5 Tri Cams with visual cracks occurring from the pin housing area to the edge. We are asking all CAMP consumers who have purchased Tri Cams to inspect the Brown size 1.5 with a lot allocation of "2G." The size can be identified through the description of each product, which has been permanently sewn to the webbing of each Tri Cam. The lot number can be identified through an etching on the side of each product.

**\*\*The defect is a hairline crack has which has occurred around the pin housing located near the webbing that is fixed to the Tri Cam. (SEE PICTURE BELOW)**

CAMP inspects all Tri Cams prior to shipping and suggests all consumers inspect merchandise prior to purchase.

CAMP USA has entered into a voluntary recall for the size 1.5 Tri Cam. Please inspect all 1.5 Tri Cams and contact CAMP to replace all cracked size 1.5 Tri Cams free of charge. Please call CAMP USA for a return authorization number as well as shipping instructions at 877-421-2267.

For more information and the actual picture, go to <http://www.camp-usa.com/tricamnotice.aspx>.

## Calendar of Events

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### AMC Outings

*Participation in AMC outings requires club membership. Outings vary in degree of danger. When you participate in an outing you should be both physically and mentally prepared and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved in outdoor activities and conduct yourselves accordingly. The Outing Leader is not responsible for your safety; you are. Please contact the Outing Leader before going on an outing, discussing your capabilities with the Outing Leader. You must be over 18 years of age to participate, or must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult, and obtain prior consent from the Outing Leader. Those accompanying minors are responsible for the minor's safety.*

.Jan 24 **Outing Leaders Outing.** T&S will present some of the material currently being taught in the AMGA Top-Rope Site Manager's course. All outing leaders are welcome to come and to keep up with the latest evolving trends. Wayne Schroeter (602) 402-1631 or wayne@iWayne.com.

Jan 26 Members Meeting, Los Olivos, 7:00 p,m

Feb 24 **Lead School** Feb 24, 25, 26, 28,29

Mar 9 **Basic School** Mar 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18,20

See Billboard and Commercially Provided sections for non-AMC ice and snow opportunities,

**\*\*Cancellations:** Please keep in mind that most outings have limits and that there is usually a waiting list to attend. Call at least 24 hours in advance to cancel. Courtesy dictates that you be on time for the outing, and that if you are sick or an emergency occurs the day of the outing, call the Outing Leader so the group doesn't lose time waiting on you.

To request outings: Call the Outings Chair, Monica Miller, at (623) 362-0456.

### Billboard—Other Scheduled Events

*Outings listed in this section are not AMC sanctioned outings. Any AMC member can list an event he or she is planning and which is open to other AMC members. The member does not have to be an approved AMC Outing Leader. If you wish to participate you should be physically and mentally prepared with the appropriate gear and should contact the member planning the outing. You are responsible for your own safety, not the person leading the outing. You should always be aware of the risks involved in outdoor activities and conduct yourself accordingly.*

**Wednesdays** North Mountain Hikes after work. Rogil Schroeter (623) 512-8465 or Oct 11

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### Outing Leaders

Requirements for becoming a leader: take the Basic, Anchors and Lead classes (or equivalents), be a member for at least one year, complete a basic first aid and CPR class (8 hours or more), and be approved for leadership by at least five current leaders through formal application process and by the Board of Directors. Contact Dave Larimer at (480) 425-9689.

Tom Conner.....480-897-7623	Sally Borg Larimer... 480-425-9689	Wayne Schroeter .....602-402-1631
Erik Filsinger .....602-906-1186	Tim Medlock ..... 719-494-1171	Jef Sloat .....602-316-1899
Jeff Hatfield .....480-783-8779	Jeff Nagel ..... 602-318-9538	Mick Strole .....520-856-3335
Scott Hoffman .....623-580-8909	Paul Norberg ..... 602-808-9244	Rick Taylor.....623-487-8507
Richard Horst.....623-434-4769	Paul Paonessa..... 602-493-7356	Frank Vers .....480-947-9435
John Keedy .....623-412-1452	Chris Query ..... 602-323-5927	Tim Ward .....602-212-1929
Tim Lange .....480-598-9124	Tim Schneider ..... 480-497-8377	
David Larimer .....480-425-9689	Rogil Schroeter ..... 623-512-8465	

# January 2004

## AMC Outing Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 <i>Sunrise 7:33</i> <i>Sunset 5:39</i> <i>Moon up</i> <i>5:40p</i> <i>Full Moon</i>	8	9	10
11	12 AMC Board Meeting	13	14 <i>Sunrise 7:33</i> <i>Sunset 5:42</i> <i>Moon up</i> <i>12:55 a on</i> <i>15th last</i>	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 <i>Sunrise 7:31</i> <i>Sunset 5:49</i> <i>New moon</i>	22	23	24
25	26 AMC Mem- bership Mtg	27	28 <i>Sunrise 7:27</i> <i>Sunset 5:55</i> <i>Moonset</i> <i>1:04a on 29th</i>	29	30	31