

THE AVALANCHE REVIEW



It was a cold and dreary late May afternoon.

Thick fog impeded the evacuation of the body of a snowboarder caught in an avalanche on the east face of Torreys Peak, Colorado, on May 21, 2011. Sadly, he died from internal bleeding during the evacuation.

Photo and story by Dale Atkins

After the
fire

tools for those left behind **page 30**

THE AVALANCHE REVIEW

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Articles, including editorials, appearing in *The Avalanche Review* reflect the individual views of the authors and not the official points of view adopted by AAA or the organizations with which the authors are affiliated unless otherwise stated.

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CONTRIBUTORS



For more than 30 years **Dale Atkins** has been training and working with avalanche professionals and mountain rescuers around the world. He's an expert in avalanche accidents and rescue, human factors, and prevention with numerous articles, books and films to his credit. He is also a past president of the American Avalanche Association.



Dave Richards was raised in the Wasatch and has worked for the Alta Ski Patrol for 16 years. He has been the director of the Alta avalanche program for three years.



Liz Tuohy serves as NOLS education director, helping people develop skills to navigate and lead through challenge. On the side, she looks to the hills for more lessons.



Elizabeth Lamphere currently lives in Crested Butte, Colorado with her 5-year-old daughter, Madelyn, who just started kindergarten. She co-founded the International Avalanche Nest-egg, and, in her free time, enjoys cooking, eating, and spending as much time in the middle of nowhere as possible.



Aaron Parmet, BSN, RN, CCRN, EMT is about to start his sixteenth winter in Summit County, Colorado where he is an ICU nurse, avalanche educator, volunteer rescuer, and avalanche technician. He is currently studying to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.



Walter F. Ballenger (1925-1983) grew up near Chicago. After serving in WWII and attending University of Chicago, he went west to the California Bay Area where he wrote stories published in *Argosy*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and others. In 1960 he moved to the Sierra where he advanced from lift attendant to director of Squaw Valley's ski patrol and avalanche control.

FROM THE EDITOR

BY LYNNE WOLFE

On a rainy day in June I had lunch with Dave Richards of Alta, who was up in the Tetons for a ski area conference. I asked him if he had any ideas for material or topics for TAR, and he suggested that we focus on tools for victims, rescuers, family, and friends, for after the rescue had concluded. He then proceeded to tell me his story, which is chronicled here on page 38; his expanded presentation on this topic at the Pro session of USAW left many of us with our hearts on our sleeves. It took me a while to phrase the theme, and as I thought about this issue, **this song** ran in a loop through my work and helped me frame my question.

Once I defined my query, authors and contributors lined up to share their messages. Dale Atkins was most emphatic, "I've been waiting for years to be asked this question," as he replied with 5500 words, based in the breadth and depth of his vast experience with rescue. In the middle of preparing this issue, well-known climbers Hayden Kennedy and Inge Perkins died directly from and due to repercussions from an early-season avalanche, and the topic became even more timely and poignant, not to mention challenging and emotional to manage. Heartfelt thanks for sharing their stories goes out to our other authors as well. Liz Tuohy writes of an experience at NOLS in 1996 that I participated in: I am deeply honored to have been helpful in a difficult and challenging situation. Elizabeth Lamphere shares her message of how, after she lost her partner in an avalanche, her friends and family helped her draw on resources to keep going and to found the IAN Fund. Nick Armitage then discusses some of his team's strategies as part of the Jenny Lake Climbing Rangers. Aaron Parmet shares his perspectives and tools from 14 years as an emergency care provider.

In addition to our themed articles, we have an introduction to heli-skiing in Patagonia from Sean Zimmerman-Wall, with enticing photos of huge terrain. Then you'll find Rob Coppelillo's dissection of a near miss; his incisive wit and ruthless self-assessment set an admirable tone for this upcoming season as he poses the question of where and how do we as a community catalog and analyze our recreational near misses? Part two of Mineral King had me entranced by the mysteries of the High Sierra in the huge snow year of 1969; Cy Whiting's illustration gave shape and color to the image in my mind. Then three guides detail how their winter operations attempted to solve the problem of how to share conditions and information throughout communication platforms and across time. Ty Falk uses data to look at how the Wasatch lies in between Intermountain and Continental climate parameters, and how this has changed over time.

Originally I had planned to focus on wet snow and rain on snow for February 2018's TAR, but my snow scientist friends persuaded me to postpone that theme until 37.3, February 2019. Instead, for 36.3 we will focus on **what is new and interesting from our local SAW events. What presentations stood out to you? What would you like TAR to delve more deeply into?** And I am always on the hunt for case studies of near misses and avalanche cycles that tell a story or pose a question. Get them to me by Christmas, please.

Finally, as you read through this material, think of Dave Richards' final words from USAW, "Keep asking each other if you are OK." I'll add one more quote, from my old buddy George Gardner who left us too soon: "Talk about things that matter." ▲



After the Fire: Pete Townshend

**After the fire the fire still burns,
the heart grows older but never
ever learns.**

**The memories smolder and the
soul always yearns,
After the fire the fire still burns.**

FROM THE PREZ

BY JOHN STIMBERIS

Hello and welcome to another edition of winter! I had a wonderful time in Breckenridge at CSAW. The regional events are a great way to get back into the winter mindset, especially when there's little snow on the surrounding mountains.



When I got back to WA we had our first measurable snow of the season on Snoqualmie Pass. I attended two other regional workshops this fall; one in Hood River, OR and my local event in Seattle. The American Avalanche Association (A3) contributed over \$15,000 to the regional workshops this year. I can hardly believe another winter is upon us. There's so

much to do to get ready.

We've been busy at A3 and there are some exciting changes on the way. Another monumental step for our association was realized in October when our membership overwhelmingly passed the revised by-laws and helped create a better defined Governing Board. I feel like the dust is beginning to settle and I can see the path ahead more clearly. With this new board comes a few new roles, some familiar faces, and a few outgoing trustees. Many will stay on as committee members or to assist with the transition. A few temporarily appointed positions will be up for a vote in a special election this winter.

I have to give an enormous thank you to the people who have served as trustees on the board. Your hard work, dedication, and commitment are commendable. Every one of our trustees is a volunteer, so not only is it a time commitment, but there's a personal financial commitment as well. Thank you all so much; you've made this association what it is today!

I have one additional pitch as we head into the darkness of winter: The ISSW 2018 abstract deadline will be here sooner than you think (usually in April). Innsbruck is far from the States, but I would really like all you hard working practitioners to consider a paper or poster. **I can't say enough about the importance of the ISSW and getting more practitioners involved,** plus a trip to Europe can have a significant impact on your personal and professional life. Give it some thought and start saving a little extra for a very unique experience.

Be safe! ▲

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A3 BOARD CHANGES & SPECIAL ELECTION CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

BY ALEPH JOHNSTON-BLOOM, SECRETARY

Have some free time in your schedule? Interested in being involved in the greater avalanche community? A3 is seeking motivated individuals to fill three positions on the A3 Governing Board. You must have interest, passion and time to invest in serving A3 and its mission:

Promoting professional excellence in avalanche safety, education, and research in the United States.

The A3 membership approved recently proposed bylaw changes that support a revised Board structure during a voting period that ran from September 25th through October 6th this fall.

- **303 ballots** were cast by Professional and Affiliate Members.
- **279 votes** (93.9%) to approve changes, 18 votes (6.1%) against changes, 6 abstentions.
- **303 voters** is record voter turnout, surpassing the previous high of 280 ballots cast during the 2014 Governing Board election.

Following this historic vote, the Governing Board met on Saturday, October 7th and formally adopted the new bylaws and identified a transition plan and timeline for implementation of the new Board structure that these bylaw changes support:

October 15, 2017—Governing Board transitions to new structure (*see figure above*)

November 1–December 20, 2017—Nomination period for newly elected Trustees (*see positions below*)

January 15–31, 2018—Special election voting period to fill the above positions through end of 2018

February 1, 2018—Newly elected Trustees join Board

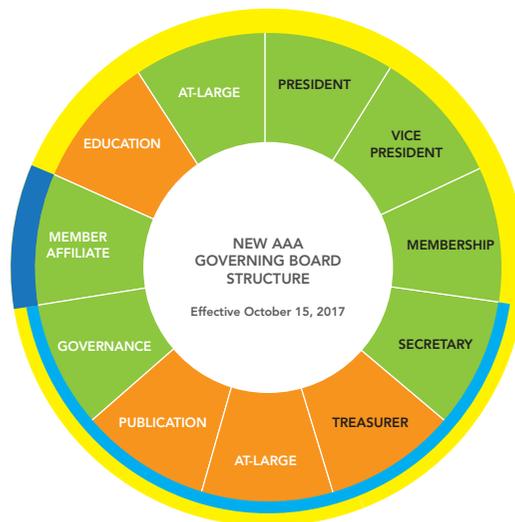
Nominations must be submitted by December 20th, 2017 to A3 Secretary Aleph Johnston-Bloom at a3secretary@avalanche.org. Please describe your experience and reasons why you'd like to join the A3 Board in your nominating letter of interest.

Trustee Openings: (See full description of responsibilities and expectations for each open Trustee position at www.americanavalancheassociation.org/employmentlist/)

Membership Trustee: The A3 Membership Trustee is responsible for leading the membership committee and serving on the A3 Board. The membership committee is primarily responsible for reviewing and vetting prospective members of A3. The membership committee is also a primary conduit for member communication and contact with the A3 Board.

Major responsibilities of the Membership Trustee include:

1. Form a Membership Committee with balanced geographic and professional sectors representation.
2. Accept, review and vet applications for professional membership to A3.
3. Represent member concerns and interests to the Board.
4. Conduct member outreach and recruitment—including presence at SAWs and other industry events.



5. Serve as a member of the A3 Board Executive Committee which includes additional meetings and greater involvement in day-to-day operations and support of ED and staff.

The Membership Trustee must be an A3 Professional Member in good standing.

Governance Trustee: The A3 Governance Trustee is responsible for leading the governance committee and serving on the A3 Board. The governance committee is responsible for ongoing review and recommendations to enhance the quality and future viability of the A3 Board. All committee work is done in partnership with and through the leadership of assigned staff.

Major responsibilities of the Governance Trustee include:

1. Form a Governance Committee to help research, advise, and direct the Board on sound governance practices.
2. Lead regular efforts to review/revise Trustee position descriptions.
3. Monitor Board's due diligence function as it relates to governance, board structure, and/or legal or moral obligations.
4. Monitor effectiveness of governance policies and adherence to governance standards, recommend changes and engage Board in dialogue on these topics as needed.
5. Lead governance committee in Board succession planning and orientation for new Trustees.

The Governance Trustee can be an A3 Professional or Affiliate Member in good standing or a committed friend of the organization.

At-Large Pro Trustee: The A3 At-Large Pro Trustee represents the interests of A3 Professional members and serves the Board in various capacities as need dictates. The A3 Board may, at times, seek individuals with specific perspective, experience, or skillsets to serve in this role. Additional duties and responsibilities will be defined by the A3 Board during the At-Large Pro Trustee's term(s) of service.

The At-Large-Pro Trustee must be an A3 Professional Member in good standing.

NEW Pro Training Courses—They're Happening This Winter!

A Message from A3 & the Pro Course Provider Alliance

We're all excited for the launch of the new Pro Training Program this winter. A3 Pro Training

courses—currently, Pro 1, Pro 1 Bridge, and Pro 2—offer valuable, relevant skill development for avalanche workers at a variety of points in their careers. All A3 Pro Training courses:

- Meet or exceed collaboratively designed, industry-driven skill and proficiency guidelines.
- Are taught by top educators who also have a solid background of operational avalanche experience.
- Teach, coach, and evaluate students to a consistent standard.

Whether you're an aspiring avalanche worker or a seasoned avalanche professional, consider one of these courses this season or in the near future.

Pro 1 is for entry-level avalanche workers as well as seasoned professionals who wish to refresh their skills and get up to speed with current practices. The course covers skills and proficiencies that enable an individual to be a contributing member of an operational avalanche program, including making and documenting relevant observations, managing personal and group risk in avalanche terrain, and contributing informed opinions during risk management discussions.

Pro 1 Bridge is for individuals who recently took a Level 2 course and/or regularly apply snow and avalanche observation skills in an operational setting and wish to demonstrate proficiency at the Pro 1 Level. Students should have their observational skills well-honed prior to this condensed course and be ready for rigorous evaluation. Students who took a Level 2 course a long time ago and/or have not been applying snow and avalanche observation skills in an operational setting are encouraged to consider a full Pro 1 course.

Pro 2 is designed for developing avalanche professionals with several seasons of applied professional experience as well as seasoned professionals who are looking to develop skills applicable to leadership roles within their operation. The course covers skills and proficiencies that enable an individual to step into a leadership role within an operational avalanche program. A focus on operational risk management and decision-making skills such as forecasting, risk mitigation strategies, and professional communication.

Questions? Do not hesitate to reach out to A3 and/or individual Pro Course Providers. ▲

REPORT ON ICAR ANNUAL MEETING: ANDORRA 2017-10-29

BY JIM DONOVAN

The International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) meets annually and is comprised of special commissions in the topics of avalanche, terrestrial rescue and medical topics. ICAR provides a platform for mountain rescue and related organizations to disseminate knowledge with the prime goal of improving mountain rescue services and their safety. This year, the 69th ICAR congress met in Andorra October 2017.

There were a couple of relevant items that came out of the avalanche commission. Avalanche rescue shovels now have their own equipment standard that was approved from the UIAA (The International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation) in July 2017. The UIAA tests climbing and mountaineering equipment and this is a common stamp of approval. A standard for avalanche probes will be developed in 2018. http://www.theuiaa.org/documents/safety-standards/UIAA_avalanche_rescue_shovels_156_final.pdf

The big advancement was the formalizing of the Mountain Safety Knowledge Base (MSK). This project aims to establish best practices in avalanche rescue based on research and rescue experience. A workgroup with representatives from research, rescue, military and education all participated in a three-day workshop that translated the content into 18 languages. Two new topics "Organized Backcountry Rescue" and "Urban Avalanche Rescue" were developed for the knowledge base. The Mountain Safety Knowledgebase will be formalized into a Swiss based non-profit organization and ICAR, UIAA, IFMGA (International Federation Mountain Guides Association) and SLF (Swiss Snow Institute) will be the founding organizations. The MSK concept will be expanded to other areas of alpine rescue. Look out for more information at the next ISSW in Innsbruck, Austria and ICAR in Chamonix, France in 2018.

Some Exceptional Rescues

Several talks described the January 2017 avalanche incident at Rigopiano, Italy from the snow and avalanche and the rescue, medical perspective. The avalanche was a D4, triggered by an earthquake and killed 29 people. 11 people survived, trapped in a hotel that was physically displaced. Some of the survivors were trapped for 60 hours. Rescuers dealing with structures that are hit by avalanches should take into account these extraordinary survival times.

There are now six US representing organizations at ICAR: the Mountain Rescue Association, Wasatch Backcountry Rescue, Teton County Search and Rescue and Silverton Avalanche School. The University of New Mexico Program in Austere and Mountain Medicine Program was approved as a new member this year. ▲



Jim Donovan is the Director of the Silverton Avalanche School. Reach him at jimd@avyschool.org, 970-903-7039.



36.1 Corrections

Angela Hawse contacted *The Avalanche Review* to set us straight about a point in Jeff Dobronyi's story about decision-making at the Opus hut. She is not Helitrax's snow safety director; Matt Steen wears that hat. Angela is one of the avalanche forecasters with Helitrax and she and Matt have worked together on the Helitrax snow safety team for the last four years.

From the Sawtooth National Forest Avalanche Center: Ethan Davis wrote our SAC season summary which was erroneously attributed to Scott Savage. Thanks Ethan for the hard work. TAR apologizes!

Avalanche center season summary authors, put your names on your summaries please!

“The Avalanche Science program addresses a gap in U.S. avalanche education between recreational courses and professional certification courses. It combines education and mentorship in a structure previously not available to aspiring avalanche workers.”

— Brian Lazar, Deputy Director, Colorado Avalanche Information Center

▶ ColoradoMtn.edu/Avalanche-Science
Leadville, Colorado | Elevation 10,200 ft.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO PETE PETERS who turned 89 years old on November 9, 2017. He served with American armed forces in Korea in 1952-53 and was a key person in our avalanche industry for 40 years.

In this photo David Sly of Maple Leaf Powder congratulates Pete at his home in Oakland, CA.