



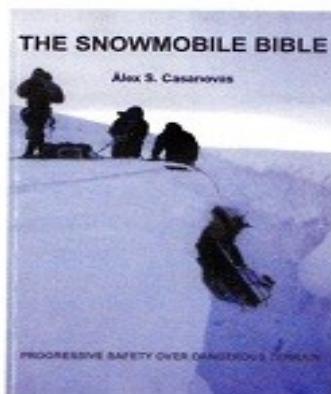
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The Snowmobile Bible: Progressive Safety Over Dangerous Terrain

By Alex S. Casanovas;
trans. by Annette
McGaffney

Lulu.com, 2008, 109pp; €40.75)



Reviewed by Jeff Rubin

The cover photo of this well-illustrated technical manual vividly demonstrates its need: three parka-clad individuals stand and kneel at the edge of a crevasse in which a snowmobile dangles by a line.

Casanovas worked for six summer seasons as a senior mountain guide and logistics coordinator at the Spanish Antarctic station Juan Carlos I on Livingston Island in the South Shetlands, where 95% of field work is conducted using snowmobiles.

The knowledge he shares is hard-won, "scars and shocks included." Written for mountain guides and expert alpinists, this book emphasizes preparation, practice and revision as keys to safety. It includes detailed information on equipment, techniques and manoeuvres over glaciers, with sections on correctly harnessing and securing people, snowmobiles and sledges; crevasse extraction; and first aid. More than a dozen diagrams and 64 color photographs, many of them annotated, help clarify the text.

The author's pragmatic approach is seen in his unvarnished advice to guides, for example: "Sedentary academics can, and often do take part in lengthy expeditions in the field, and the wiser individuals are aware of their own limitations. But the age, health and physical capabilities of your clients have to be considered objectively by you in terms of their own well being and the safety of the convoy as a whole."

Casanovas' admirable goal is to "make available the techniques which at the present time I consider to be the most secure and reduce the relevant risk by the largest amount." While he acknowledges that information "can never guarantee total security," this book is an invaluable reference that is certain to be studied, debated and refined by its users on ice and snowfields around the world. □