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olf Bae laughing at the ridiculous weather four pitches up the headwall of the Norwegian Pillar on Great Trango Tower, Pakistan. Rolf died on K2 a month later [p. 278]. Stein-Ivar Gravdal

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Bjarte Bø high on the

Great Trango headwall preparing to move camp [p. 278]. Stein-Ivar Gravdal

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PREFACE

After a year in rehab, the Piolet d'Or—the "golden ice axe" prize in world alpinism—reinvented itself as the Piolets d'Or. In case you missed it, the change is an "s," which in French makes a word plural. The editors of the *AAJ* were among the many voices disapproving of the original Piolet d'Or because judges picked a single "winner" from the year's climbs. We feel that climbing, and especially climbing mountains, is a deeply personal pursuit; we like to see it driven by private goals and a love of the mountain environment. And we look to climbing events and media for inspiration that helps to keep our minds in the clouds even when we're sitting at our desks. From our perspective, a high-visibility event like the Piolet d'Or should celebrate our shared passions, not promote a competitive spirit.

When Marko Prezelj used the stage to turn down a Piolet d'Or that had been offered him (for his new route on Chomolhari—see *AAJ* 2007, cover and p. 14), the controversy went public. As the rhetoric boiled over, the organizers, spearheaded by *Montagnes* magazine, decided it was time for a re-think. They reached out widely, including to the *AAJ*, and drafted a new charter recasting the event as a celebration rather than a competition. But not everyone was convinced, and so in January 2008, shortly before the 17th annual Piolet d'Or ceremony was to take place, the award was suspended.

Now please welcome the Piolets d'Or. In the words of Doug Scott, president of this year's international jury, "This edition signals the rebirth of the Piolet d'Or. For us there are no winners, no losers. The honored are the ambassadors of an art, a passion." The new awards "aim to celebrate the taste for adventure and sense of exploration that lie behind the art of climbing in the world's great mountain ranges." Criteria include style, exploratory spirit, commitment, respect for objective dangers, respect for people on and off the team, respect for the environment, and respect for the needs of future generations who will tread these hills. A lot of respect.

Because these are things we all hold dear, the *AAJ*'s editors support the Piolets d'Or organizers' efforts to live up to these ideals. Not only is the *AAJ* the world's reference for new mountain routes, we've long chosen our feature articles by informal criteria much akin to the Piolets d'Or's new charter. We provided the jury with extensive information about climbs in 2008, a role we'll likely continue as long as the Piolets d'Or is more celebration than competition.

The ceremony last April—honoring 2008 climbs—was a great initial effort. Our associate editor Dougald MacDonald traveled to France to observe. He saw that the French love alpinism, and they know how to throw a party. Walter Bonatti earned a golden axe for lifetime achievement, and three teams took home axes for their ascents: Kazuya Hiraide and Kei Taniguchi on the southwest face of Kamet in India; Kazauki Amano, Fumitaka Ichimura, and Yusuke Sato on the north face of Kalanka, also in India; and Simon Anthamatten and Ueli Steck on the north face of Tengkangpoche, Nepal.

All three ascents are featured in the following pages. There you'll see why they deserve praise and attention. But, were their climbs somehow "better" than the other ascents covered in these pages? Only if they had more fun—and left the mountain clean and earned friendship from those they met along their journey. These are goals that inspire us all.

JOHN HARLIN III

Editor



THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB 2008-2009

The AAC unites climbers to advance the climbing way of life.

The American Alpine Club's board of directors adopted this new vision statement in 2008. After a comprehensive survey of the climbing community and interviews with numerous individual climbers, the board also ratified a mission statement and key attributes that will serve as guiding principles for the Club's operations in the coming years.

Mission: We provide knowledge and inspiration, conservation and advocacy, and logistical support for the climbing community.

Attributes:

- Chronicling climbing achievement and preserving climbing's history
- Promoting standards for education and equipment
- Protecting the places we climb
- Enhancing scientific knowledge about the climbing world
- Advocating for American climbers around the world
- Providing logistical support
- Bringing together and welcoming all climbers

Looking over the AAC's myriad activities, it's clear the Club recently has taken big steps toward these goals.

In the knowledge arena, the AAC completed and opened the Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum in Golden, Colorado, in early 2008. In the same building, the AAC Library constructed a new, secure room for the 28,000-volume Central Asia Library, which will roughly double the size of the AAC collection. The Club also expanded its online presence, with new blogs from the American Alpine Journal (AlpineBriefs.wordpress.com) and the library (AAClibrary.wordpress.com). Major developments are planned for the AAC web site in 2009 and beyond, including expanded online information from the *Journal*.

In conservation, the Club continued its important work with the Alpine Conservation Partnership in Nepal and Peru, and launched "Climbatology," a traveling presentation on the ways climate change is reshaping mountain environments. In partnership with Patagonia Inc., an AAC-sponsored trail crew led by Rolando Garibotti began a three-year project to improve trails and climber-related infrastructure in Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina, home of Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre.

The year 2008 also saw a host of initiatives aimed at community-building, both at home and abroad. AAC members Eliza Moran and Nancy Norris organized the Chinese-American Ladies' Climbing Exchange, in which female climbers gathered to climb in the Tetons last summer and in western China in the fall. In October, the Club hosted three major events in Colorado and Utah. First was the International Climbers' Meet, the brainchild of outgoing



AAC president Jim Donini. Eighty-two climbers from 23 countries experienced a week of climbing on the unique, world-class cracks of Indian Creek, Utah. The climbers then traveled to Colorado to join hundreds of others at the first AAC Craggin' Classic, a weekend of outdoor parties, clinics, climbing, and a Layton Kor show before an audience of 1,200. Finally, the American Alpine Journal hosted nearly 20 editors of climbing journals from a dozen countries during a weeklong Editors' Summit. Both the International Climbers' Meet and the Craggin' Classic will be back in 2009.

The Club's efforts to support climbers continue in many other ways. Design of the new AAC-operated Shawangunks campground is under way, and plans are in the works for a climber campground by the New River Gorge. In 2008, the AAC handed out more than \$40,000 in grants to expeditions and humanitarian, conservation, and research projects related to the mountains. In early 2009, the Club partnered with Nikwax to create the Bellwether Grant, funding science that documents the impacts of climate change on alpine environments.

We are indebted to Jim Donini for leading the Club through a comprehensive planning effort. Steve

Swenson—who was intimately involved in our planning as vice president—takes the helm as president to deliver on these plans and promises to the climbing community. You can help by inviting your climbing partners to become AAC members. Learn more at www.AmericanAlpineClub.org.

2008 AAC Annual Awards

Honorary Members: Bob Craig, Nazir Sabir Honorary President: William Putnam Robert and Miriam Underhill Award: John Gill Robert Hicks Bates Award: Dave Turner David R. Brower Conservation Award: Doug Tompkins Literary Award: John Harlin III Angelo Heilprin Citation: Jim Henriot

At left: The Chinese-American women's exchange, in western China. Marilyn Geninatti From top: Adam French working on the Ishinca Peace Toilet. Courtesy Adam French Layton Kor lecturing in Boulder and hanging out with Lynn Hill. Cody Blair (both photos) The International Climbers' Meet at Indian Creek, Utah. Anna Piunova





