

AAC, Sierra Nevada Section. As we moved closer to the end of the 20th century, 1998 gave us some disconcerting glimpses of what climbers probably will encounter in the century to come. Facing the challenges of increasing commercialization of our national parks plus some misguided attempts by federal agencies to regulate bolting in Wilderness areas forced us to realize that being very organized, very vocal and politically savvy was our best defense. Section membership this year surpassed 500, taking AAC membership as a whole over the 5,000 mark with the enrollment of Jenny Lundberg of Palo Alto.

At the Club's Annual Meeting in Denver, three Sierra Nevadans (coincidentally, all from Berkeley) won top awards. Galen Rowell was made an Honorary Member, in acknowledgment of all the hard work and many contributions he has made throughout the years to the AAC, to other groups supporting good stewardship of Yosemite National Park and to the climbing community in general. Never one to rest on his laurels, Allen Steck amassed yet another this year, the Robert & Miriam Underhill Award for outstanding success in the various fields of mountaineering endeavor. The recipient of the David A. Sowles Award was Betsy White, for the valiant and successful rescue of her Makalu teammate, Mike Warburton, in 1980. In presenting this award, Jim Wickwire pointed out that it was Betsy's heroism in this rescue that inspired Andrew Kauffman to initiate the Sowles Award in 1981.

Two other Sierra Nevadans honored at the Annual Meeting were Greg Adair and Dick Duane, who, like Galen, have poured a tremendous amount of their time, energy and souls into the preservation of Camp 4 and the many issues affecting climbers in Yosemite National Park. Greg, a tireless activist, was instrumental in convincing the Sierra Club to file a parallel lawsuit against the National Park Service that has temporarily halted any new construction in the Swan Slab/Camp 4 area. Equally tireless is attorney Dick Duane, whose massive and cogent "Supplementary Application for Placement of Camp 4 on the National Historical Register" resulted in a favorable ruling that has granted Camp 4 consideration as a possible National Historic site.

In counterpoint to all the problems being dealt to the climbing community in Yosemite, George Gluck succeeded in forging trails, both physically and diplomatically, that now connect us in very favorable ways to our friends in the National Park Service in Yosemite. His Volunteers in Parks group completed ten monthly projects this year around the park, and in a remarkable gesture, the NPS has given George and his volunteers the green light to focus on the improvement of Camp 4, among other sites. George's VIP projects continue to offer climbers new ways to have a very positive impact on Yosemite.

On the international front, Eliza Moran is now the editor of a UIAA publication highlighting amateur climbers throughout the world. Her UIAA connections are also serving her well as the Chair of the Climbers' Exchange Committee. In May, she facilitated a highly productive exchange between the Alaska Section and the Swiss Alpine Club, and has several other exchanges in the works throughout the Club.

Another innovative idea by Eliza produced the AAC Authors' Night events in February and June. Keppler's Bookstore in Menlo Park was the venue for the February event, with local authors Galen Rowell, Chris Jones and John Hart featured. In June, Jim Wickwire joined local authors Steve Roper, Tom Holzel and Daniel Duane (son of Dick Duane) for the festivities, which were dramatically heightened by Tom's legendary "May Punch." Between these two events and in the depths of the year's terrible El Niño storms season, we enjoyed a sumptuous Annual Wine & Cheese Party at the home of Steve Russell in Atherton in March. The evening was punctuated by lively discussions and speeches by John Middendorf and Brock Wagstaff about the NPS's plans for Yosemite Valley. The ground swell of concern that surfaced at this event helped compel the AAC to eventually join the lawsuit filed by The Friends of Yosemite Valley.

As the year closed, our Section continued to closely monitor plans for Yosemite. Highway 140, which enters the park at the Arch Rock area and runs along the Merced River, will remain closed for many months. A massive project to widen and rebuild the roadbed, which was damaged heavily in the 1997 floods, has been initiated by the NPS. As a result, many of the most popular climbing cliffs in the Valley are temporarily closed, including The Cookie, Arch Rock, Elephant Rock, Pat and Jack, Cascade Falls and The Rostrum. The Reed's area on Highway 120 is slated for temporary closure as well.

By keeping abreast of future NPS plans and assessing their impact on climbers, our Section hopes to raise the political profile and collective voice of the world's climbing community as it continues to flock to "the granite crucible."

LINDA McMILLAN, *Chair*

AAC, Central Rockies Section. This has been a progressive and prosperous year for the Central Rockies Section. The 1997 Section Banquet got our Section going financially and helped carry us into the new year. The Section also had several events to try to coalesce our membership and get folks out. A gear swap/wine & cheese party at the Boulder Rock Club started the year. The Section newsletter editor, Eric Wagg, continues with our quarterly publication, and a treasurer, Jennifer Shinn, has been added to our volunteer staff.

We became active this year with the Boulder Ice Climbers Coalition. This grassroots organization is working with several governmental agencies to explore options for man-made ice for climbing in Boulder Canyon. The Section has donated \$600 to this non-profit organization and pledged continuing assistance. Other projects included Section T-shirts last winter and canvas shirts, with the AAC logo embroidered on them, this winter. The latter are available upon pre-paid orders (see web site). Another big step into the public eye is the creation of our web site by George Bell and Peter Hsi. Visit us at <http://crs.alpineclub.org/>.

The Second Annual Section Banquet, held at Trios Restaurant in Boulder, was by far the most enjoyable, social and well-attended event. It had an elegant feel, even though it was quite casual. The keynote slide show was provided by the legendary Tom Frost. His spectacular presentation, "In a Time Long Ago and Far Away," was a historic review from his first ascent of the *Salathé Wall* and the second ascent of the *Nose* of El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, set to the theme from *Star Wars*. This quality program was such a success that it was contracted for the AAC Annual Meeting in Denver in November.

Mike Houston gave the banquet's lead-in program, an account of his first ascent with Jed and Doug Workman of the east face of Mount Nevermore in the Kichatna Spires in Alaska. A silent auction for the benefit of the Section was also offered at the Banquet. The proceeds were due in part to the tremendous support of the outdoor equipment industry, including Black Diamond, Patagonia, 5.10, Trango, Backpacker Pantry, Cascade Designs, Red Feather, FILA, Clif Bar, Trails Illustrated and Madden Packs. They have provided our Section the opportunity to become a viable voice for the climbing community in Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico.

Climber exchanges continue to be an interesting but complex way of creating interaction among both American and international communities. The CRS was deeply involved with the Slovenians early in the year. Christian Beckwith and Jeff Hollenbaugh put in many hours creating a tasty schedule for our guests. Unfortunately, the Slovenians had to cancel. Many of their members had spent long, grueling months on Dhaulagiri. They returned safely, but tired and broke. We are currently involved with our proposed CRS-NZAC exchange,