

Molly Loomis celebrating sunrise on the Komarova. *Melis Coady*

On August 3rd we had also attempted a prominent unclimbed peak two mountains north of 52 Years of American Duct Tape. Two-thirds of the way up the north ridge, we retreated due to unstable snow conditions. We then returned to the Ala Archa in late September.

MOLLY LOOMIS, AAC

## BORKOLDY

*Central Borkoldoy, exploration and various first ascents.* The central area of the Borkoldoy range in southeast Kyrgyzstan is a group of superb “alpine” peaks that are well-defended on every side by chains of slightly lower mountains. They are north of the Dankova group in the West Kokshaal-Too. It has been traveled by a few trekking groups in recent years, but other than one (unsuccessful) attempt by a Russian team on the highest peak (5,170m) there are no known records of previous mountaineering expeditions. Our ISM expedition in September (Adrian Nelhams, Vladimir Komissarov, and I (guides); Ben Box, Steve Brown, James Bruton, Dr. Tom Fox, Phil Naybour, George Ormerod, John Porter, and Nick Wheatley) expected to approach on foot using horses for carrying camp equipment. However, with all our manpower we were able to open up an old geologists’ road made in Soviet times. This led to a broad river delta, which was drivable for 20km to a base camp at 3,570m, where all the main glaciers terminate, making it a fantastic base for exploration.

After reconnaissance, ABC was set up at 4,240m on the right-hand branch of the double-headed glacier running southward (we later named this Ilbirs Glacier, after snow-leopard tracks were discovered). Ascents were made of Pk Ilbirs (5,017m, PD+), the big dominant peak on the right side; the obvious rock pyramid on the east side (Zoob Barsa, 4,685m, PD+), and a traverse of Trident Peak (AD) just north of Pk Ilbirs. One team explored the glacier to the west and climbed Pk 4,857m by its west ridge.

Overlooking base camp were rock walls between 100-500m high. These proved to be made of excellent solid limestone and gave two fine routes (E2 and HVS). For the second “foray,” ABCs were set up on the east branch of Ilbirs glacier and the base of Pk 5,170m. Several summits above

Ilbirs E were climbed, including the excellent Dvoynay Vershina ("Twin Peak," 5,041m). The forepeak of Pk 5,170m gave a pleasant excursion to 4,915m (named Sakchi—Sentry), then a serious attempt was made on Pk 5,170m via a couloir on the west flank to the north ridge. At ca 5,000m the ridge became seriously knife-edged and corniced, and the attempt was abandoned. Three smaller summits on the opposite side of the glacier gave easier days before the expedition decamped. All in all it was a very enjoyable trip to the most remote mountains any of the team had visited (ca 200km to nearest proper village). Sightings of the rare Marco Polo sheep and seeing prints of the exceptionally rare snow leopard were a great privilege.

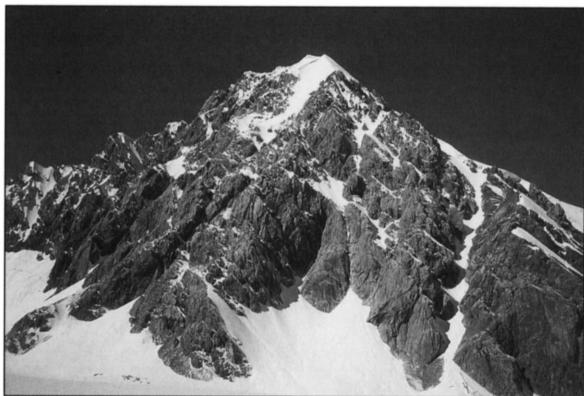
PAT LITTLEJOHN, United Kingdom

*Kuili Range, first ascents.* Gaizka Bilbao and Belen Menedez from Spain, with Amando Niño de Rivera (Mexico) and Gerard van der Berg (Holland), climbed two new routes in the Karator Valley of the Kuili Range, first visited by an ISM expedition in 2000. The ascents took place between August 8 and September 5 and were named Controlador Aereo and Zoolander. No further information.

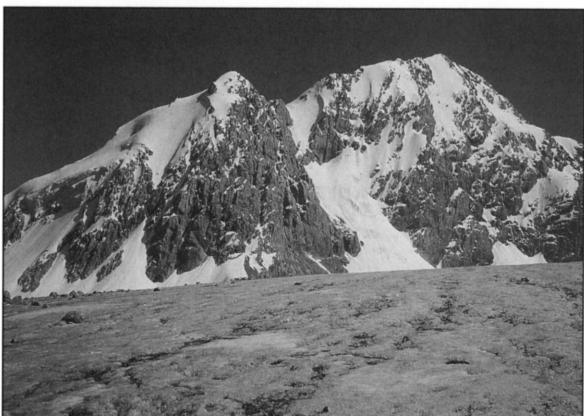
Servei General d'Infomacio de Muntanya, Spain

*Dzungart Range, first recorded visit and exploration.* After an acclimatization ascent in the Ala Archa, Graham Sutton and I traveled from Bishkek via Karakol to At Jailoo (2,655m). From there we were able to make a 25-minute flight by helicopter to a base camp at 3,060m in the previously unvisited Djungart Range of the Tien Shan (Kyrgyz Map K-44-XIX: N 41°44' 32.6", E 78°56' 52.5"). We arrived on August 1.

Our aim was to explore the region and make the first ascent of its highest peak, Pt. 5,318m. Running south from base camp, two parallel valleys flank the east and west sides of this peak; we reconnoitered both. We first established an Advanced Base at 3,545m in the eastern valley, and on the 7th we climbed a gully on the flank of Pt 5,318m that connected with the



Pk Ilbirs (5,017m), climbed via the right-hand ridge. James Brunton



The still-virgin Pk 5,170m and its "Servant." James Brunton