

NMA has been an Important Part of the UIAA for Many Years

■ **Peter Muir**
President
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(UIAA)

Peter Muir currently serves as the President of the UIAA – International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation. Prior to his role with the UIAA, which is regarded as a leading organization in the field of mountaineering, he held the position of President at the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC). We conducted an interview with him for the special issue dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Nepal Mountaineering Association in Nepal Parbat.



Q: *Could you kindly introduce yourself and share some key highlights from your personal journey in the realm of climbing and mountaineering?*

A: I came to mountaineering through skiing and discovering the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) and its local section in the mid-1980s. I expanded my experience with friends and through ACC trips, including volunteering as an amateur leader with ACC activities locally (rock climbing) and nationally (mountaineering and ski touring). Some highlights include participating in the first ascent of Mount Manitoba, St. Elias Mountains, Yukon Territory, Canada in 1992, the 2000 Japanese Alpine Club and ACC celebration of the 75th anniversary of the First Ascent of Mount Alberta by Japanese climbers, and climbing Citlaltepēt Mexico in 2003.

Q: *What motivated you to assume the significant role of President within the UIAA?*

A: I am motivated by the climbing community and the relationships that are built from the activities. I believe

that these associations can grow and be shared by active guidance and leadership. I spent many years volunteering with the ACC, eventually becoming National President. I felt that the UIAA needed an input of energy and

communication between the General Assembly, the Management Committee, and the Commissions; not so much as a new direction but as a review and reinvigoration of the plan. I am indebted to the aid and assistance of all levels, but especially my fellow Executive Board EB members. I feel I have leadership and ideas to contribute to growth. I enjoy the challenge.

Q: *Would you elaborate on the core mission and primary objectives that guide the UIAA's activities?*

A: I cannot state it better than the mission adopted within the current

strategic plan: “The mission of the UIAA is the apple of the values and interests of the climbing mountaineering community and to provide assistance to member federations promoting environmentally responsible, enjoyable and safe mountaineering”



Q: We're keen to learn about recent initiatives undertaken by the UIAA to advance the climbing and mountaineering community.

A: The UIAA has recently expanded its training activities by creating a new, sole task commission, reinvigorated its youth programs to concentrate on expanding them internationally, is investigating a restarting of climbing festivals around the world, and is moving into exciting new prospects of safety investigations. We also formed a Climate Change Task Force to review and refine our own approach to carbon footprint reduction as our first step in advocating and helping our members develop their own climate footprint programs where required and requested.

Q: Could you outline the strategies employed by the UIAA to establish and uphold global safety standards and effective training protocols for climbing and mountaineering?

A: We have recently moved our training program to become its own commission as a priority for developing training programs for members. The Safety Commission is working hard on reworking old standards and creating new standards for new technology, such as avalanche transceivers.

Q: It would be insightful to understand the nature of the relationship between the UIAA and the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA).

A: As a long-standing and active member, the NMA has been an important part of the UIAA for many years. You have provided your best experts and officials for important UIAA Commissions and bodies and have hosted several important UIAA gatherings and meetings in recent years. NMA members led our efforts on the Mountain Workers Initiative. And, of course, NMA members have been valuable contributors to the governance of the UIAA over the years. In particular, I think of UIAA Honorary Member Ang Shering Sherpa - a trusted and honoured friend of both UIAA and mine personally.

Q: Are there any collaborative programs or forthcoming initiatives that the UIAA and NMA are currently engaged in or planning together?

A: I certainly hope NMA will join in our mountaineering commission reviews of high-altitude mountaineering to ensure the safety of all





participants, especially as it relates to access management. I also hope that we can work together in respect of our mutual carbon footprints to activate actions to counter climate change. I would be excited to see NMA and its members come on board with Ice Climbing as an excellent platform to showcase Nepalese climbers' talents and skills to the rest of the world.

Q: NMA is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its establishment. In this context, how do you perceive NMA's role and responsibilities in fostering mountaineering both locally and internationally?

A: This is a fantastic celebration and recognition of the NMA's long and storied career in advancing and advocating for mountaineering and appreciation of mountain areas. Certainly, the NMA is at the forefront of driving mountaineering development, and we are eager to wholeheartedly support your efforts in promoting not only safe but also thrilling and adventurous mountaineering experiences.

Q: From your vantage point, how do you envision the future trajectory of the mountaineering landscape in Nepal?

A: I believe that the mountaineering landscape will expand but I hope that will do so in a manner that reflects the finest principles of mountaineering with an emphasis, as the late UIAA Honorary Member Doug Scott would have said, on adventure & challenge over convenience.

Q: Your perspective on suggestions for the Nepalese government and the local climbing community to further foster the development of mountaineering in Nepal would be greatly appreciated.

A: Certainly, Nepal has the preeminent mountaineering possibilities but as with every valuable asset, careful

management and conservative principles will be required to maintain both mountaineering and Nepal's natural heritage and the greatest aspirations of its climbers. Our Mountaineering Commission is ready and able to offer input to the Nepalese government, the NMA, and the local climbing community promoting safe but adventurous mountaineering.

Q: Addressing environmental degradation in popular climbing destinations is of paramount importance. Could you elaborate on the strategies employed by the UIAA to address this issue?

A: We recognize that mountaineers are responsible for carrying out their sport in a way that practice does not degrade areas or interfere with cultural practice. Therefore our climate change principles and our training standards will include recognition that these are essential elements to successful, sustainable, and gratifying mountaineering.

Q: To illustrate the impact of your work, could you provide examples of successful instances where the UIAA has effectively promoted sustainable climbing and mountaineering practices?

A: Most of the groundwork is conducted by our members, but the UIAA is expected and seeks to create recommended practices to guide climbers as responsible participants in the sport, including such things as the UIAA Climbers Manifesto and the UIAA Environmental Guidelines, both of which we are currently under review for modernization and re-publication.

Thank you for allowing me to contribute to Nepal Parbat and to recognize NMA. You are my dear friends, and it is a pleasure and honour for me to have been given this opportunity.