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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Alpine Club Announces International Appointments

New U.S. Representatives Named to UIAA Safety and Medical Commissions

(GOLDEN, COLO.) – The American Alpine Club (AAC) recently announced two candidates to be U.S. delegates on two key commissions of the Union Internationale des Associations d' Alpinisme (UIAA) or “International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation.” Dr. James A. Litch was appointed to the Medical Commission and David Custer was appointed to the Safety Commission.

As the national body representing U.S. alpinists, the AAC appoints delegates to the UIAA commissions. The UIAA leadership is expected to approve the candidates at a May meeting.

AAC President Mark Richey said, “The AAC is very proud of its role linking American climbers to the rest of the world’s mountaineering community. We’re also extremely happy to have two such distinguished members represent American alpinists on the world stage.”

Litch is a renowned high altitude and rescue medicine physician, climber, and mountain guide with more than 20 years experience. He recently returned to Seattle, Wash. to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after living for more than six years in Nepal as a health advisor to the Ministry of Health, mountain guide for Adventure Consultants High Altitude Expeditions, Ltd., and rescuer for the Himalayan Rescue Association. He serves on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore, Md. Litch received the 2001 Wilderness Medical Society Education Award recognizing his long service to mountain medicine and rescue training both in the U.S. and internationally.

When he is not climbing, Custer teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he has supervised a number of climbing related projects. He has been a non-aligned member of the American Society for Testing and Materials Climbing and Mountaineering subcommittee and participated in the U.S. Forest Service's negotiated rulemaking committee regarding fixed anchors in wilderness. As his website notes, “In his spare time, Dave busts up climbing equipment.” He has also taught a seminar called "Testing and Evaluation of Mountaineering Equipment" and is now doing work in conjunction with the MIT Center for Sports Innovation. He can be reached at

usuaasafetyrep@yahoo.com and his website is
<http://web.mit.edu/custer/www/rocking/rocking.html>.

About The American Alpine Club

Founded in 1902, The American Alpine Club is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting climbing knowledge, conserving mountain environments, and serving the American climbing community. The AAC currently has nearly 7,000 members throughout the U.S. and across the globe. More information can be found at www.americanalpineclub.org.

About The UIAA

The Union Internationale des Associations d' Alpinisme, (UIAA) or “International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation” represents several million mountaineers and climbers, world-wide, on international issues. Formed in 1932 it now has over 88 members associations from some 76 countries, all of national importance. It is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the International Federation representing mountaineering and climbing.