



Tell-Tale

official publication of the Northport Yacht Club



Commodore's Corner

April 27, 2010

Winter was ok, as winters go. Snow, skiing, travel, driving to work in the dark and returning in the dark again, making the best of difficulties and enduring more than our share of sorrows. Done with that, though. Snow is gone, the mud is drying up, grass is turning from brown to green, and the trees are budding out. Time to start thinking about boats, swimming and summer friends. Oh boy.

Our hearts go out to our friends and neighbors, the Metcalfs of Bath for the sad loss of a loved father and the tragic loss of a dear son. We have meager solace in the inspiration of the family's dignity and endurance. But we feel a sense of warmth and pride in the response of the Bayside community, offering comfort and support in a big way. Our community is about many things, but mainly about people and friendships; when there's a need, we're all there.

It is May already and my concentration is drifting ahead to preparations for summer. This issue of Tell Tale is a lot of fun. There are plenty new developments, and highlights of a special season to come. Read on and enjoy these stories and postings.

We will hear details of what promises to be a special and unique kick-off event, Memorial Day weekend, on Belfast harbor. It will be hard to top last year's mountain-top event, but from Wentworth's you can see your mooring across the bay. Sharpen your eyes.

Learn about the new Northport web site, www.northportyachtclub.org. It has a new look, more information and better usability.

Read everything you need to know about the sailing school program, and its new director, Danny Webster. Hear about the Bayside cook book, and about another Food Pantry charity event. And, there are a couple of adventure stories to take you to far off places and exciting times.

Our newsletter isn't quite as good as being there, but this issue does a great job of building anticipation. Read on and imagine summer sun, friends and activities, boating, swimming and volunteerism. I for one can't wait.

See you on May 30 at Wentworth's.

A message from the Sailing School Head Instructor

Dear Friends and Neighbors of Bayside,

As you may know, I have been selected by the Northport Yacht Club to lead the Sailing School this summer. Following in the footsteps of many Bayside legends, from Mr. Downs, who taught my father and his friends in the 70's, to Emerson Smith, Tori Reilly, and Garrett Lojek, from whom I take the reins this year, I am honored to be continuing this Bayside tradition. I look forward to a very successful season.

I come from one of the original Bayside families; my great-great grandfather, Charles Rogers, was one of the first settlers of the original campground. The Webster side of my family has been living in or visiting Bayside since the early 1900's. My immediate family and I visited every summer until 2001, when we bought our own house on Shore Road and we began spending most of the summer there.

Contrary to the widespread popular belief, I *do*, in fact, have a life outside of Bayside. I am currently a student studying (a.k.a. suffering) chemical engineering at Cornell University, and I hope to pursue business school afterwards.

I began sailing with my father as a young child, and I joined the Sailing School when I was 10. Margie Spencer-Smith was in charge of the program then, and she did a great job making sure I knew all the basics. I went on to become a junior instructor, and eventually a senior instructor. I have loved every minute of my time in the Sailing School, from the Name Game on Monday mornings, to Bailer Wars on hot August days, to knots and sailing stories on the rainy ones. Oh yeah, and the hundreds of hours I've spent teaching kids out on the water have been pretty great too. And Thursday Night Races have given me some of my fondest memories (as my .919 winning percentage will attest to).

This summer, senior instructor Heather Eastty and I look forward to working with our returning instructors—Brendan Cassidy, Alli Webster, Mariah Lojek, Rasha El-Jaroudi, Owen Lojek, and senior volunteer Ed Williams—as we welcome a brand new batch of instructors-in-training.

While the program will see a number of changes, both large and small, this summer we will continue make the Sailing School a fun experience where students can make great friends and wonderful memories, as well as learn life-long sailing skills in a safe and well-supervised environment.

In addition to the Sailing School, which offers quality sailing instruction to those between the ages of 10 and 18, private lessons will be offered for children and adults of all ages.

It has been a great honor getting to know all the kids of Bayside over the past several years. Again, I look forward to a very successful summer with the NYC Sailing School, and I am excited to work with you and your kids!

Yours in Sailing,

Danny Webster

April Cruising: No boats, no bugs.

Nakomis Nelson

Have you ever dreamed of cruising the Maine Coast without mosquitoes? Or of being the only boat in Pulpit Harbor? April cruising is more than huddled moments in a winter sleeping bag. It can be, given the right weather, as idyllic as August cruising – maybe even more so. Imagine spending the better part of a week on the water without seeing a single other recreational boat. With daytime highs in the low sixties, and the upper thirties at night, cocktails in the cockpit might not happen every evening – but do they in August?

This year, we thought tax day a particularly good day to launch *Brigadoon*. Katie's school break was just around the corner and the magnolia at the end of our driveway was in full bloom. After a day of provisioning and sorting out the soft goods, we slipped her mooring line into the 38 degree water of Islesboro's Ames Cove. A gentle northwesterly wind pushed us along at a peaceful six knots while we stripped off layers of clothing under a clear blue sky.

By mid-afternoon the wind had changed direction for the fourth time. However, we were still sailing smartly, reaching down the backside of North Haven bound for Vinalhaven's Seal Bay. The new wind turbines installed on the west side of Vinalhaven, being over three hundred feet tall, are a valuable tool for watching windshifts.

It wasn't hard to find a cozy place to drop the hook in Seal Bay (no other boats, beautiful scenery, and no wind). Once settled on the anchor and with wineglass (mug) in hand we set off for a row to scout our surroundings. Katie promptly found the highest, steepest, and most overgrown island and insisted we scramble to the top. No broken bones but a good bruise later, we summited Birch Island – not the most recommended hike but interesting enough.

Back on *Brigadoon*, and with proper wineglass in hand, the scrabble board came out and we enjoyed the most serene and majestic evening imaginable – remarkably, in the open cockpit. The day's light and variable winds never started the cooling seabreeze cycle. As the sun set, red potatoes, chicken cordon blue, and asparagus roasted in the oven – you can imagine how good the cabin smelled when we finally came down for dinner.

The next day dawned fair and clear, albeit with no wind. Katie, always at the ready for morning baking, set about to prepare blueberry muffins. I gathered the anchor rode onboard, shortening up the scope to the chain. With the realization that there was going to be no great gale (at least not any time soon) we decided to move to a different hole in Seal Bay for breakfast. More rowing and a morning hike followed.

The nook between Hen and Bluff Islands is surely one of the most magical anchorages in the area. The south side of Hen Island is easily climbable and offers gorgeous views towards Isle Au Haut. Although we chose to pass on the swim call, were it August, we might not have left Seal Bay at all that day.

With the building southerly, we set off on a reach for Pt. Lookout, on the northern end of Isle Au Haut. Katie had fresh bread, stuffed with pesto, garlic, and cheddar cheese, sliding out of the oven, perfectly timed with the rattling anchor chain upon our arrival at Pt. Lookout.

After a short walk on shore we were again sliding along, this time with the wind on our stern, heading north up East Penobscot Bay, comforted with the knowledge of more snug harbors ahead and content with the peace and solitude of April cruising in Maine.

NYC Don Knott Memorial Skipper of the Year Award

At the conclusion of the 2009 sailing season, fellow racing skippers vote Jim Facey as recipient of the Don Knott Memorial Skipper of the Year Award. Jim sailed his Ranger 29, *Banshee*, to a fourth place finish in the 2009 John Short "Big Boat" Series and showed considerable improvement from the start of the season to the end. The final few races, Jim sailed *Banshee* to very strong top three finishes in each race. He also had a strong showing in the 2009 Around Islesboro Race, winning the Cruising Canvas class. But it's more than just placing well on the race course. It's really about passion for the sport and earning respect and admiration of the fellow racing skippers. Congratulations Jim.

Kick Off Celebration

The Northport Yacht Club is pleased to announce that the annual Kick Off Celebration will be held on Sunday May 30th at 5:30 PM. Did you read that right? Yes, indeed. After many years of being known as the Kick Off Dinner, we've changed the name to more accurately describe the event. Actually, most of us have always thought of it as a celebration so the new name fits well. You will recall that last year was the first year we tried something different when we gathered at Point Lookout. Our members agreed the view was spectacular and facility simply 'first-class'. However, the facility rental charge at Point Lookout was not to be waived for 2010 and the cost for a repeat event quickly became prohibitive.

So last fall, members were encouraged to participate in an "on line" survey to help us plan for this year's event. Several things were clear – you wanted to continue with a mingling format, you wanted a nice location, we needed to have more food and the ticket price should not be more than \$30.00 per person.

In response to your feedback we have selected the Wentworth Event Center for this year's KOC. Located along the south side of Route 1 on the way to Searsport, it should suit our needs quite well. The view hasn't quiet the grandeur of Point Lookout, but any view of Bayside in the distance is worth a second glance! Many years ago this building was operated as the Chowder House. In fact, we actually had the dinner here once. You won't recognize it now. The interior has been opened to accommodate functions and the décor updated. If you're curious, check out: wentwortheventcenter.com . Once again we will have a format that encourages mingling throughout the event.

Food will be provided by Creative Caterers: <creative-catering-stockton-springs.com.> Last year we had many more attendees than we had planned for – thus less food than was ideal. To ensure that adequate food is available this year we will give a final head count to the caterer and then stick to it. So please, if you plan to attend, return the pink reservation copy to me ASAP. This is very much appreciated. If you contact me at the last minute looking for reservations, they will only be available if others cancel. That said, please advise me promptly if your plans change and you cannot attend.

The last challenge was to hold the line on ticket prices. The good news is that we have found a way to make that happen while saving at least a few of our members some money. The NYC will be running a "wine and beer" cash bar at the event instead of paying someone else to manage this for us. This means that the club saves money and the drink prices will be slightly lower than last year. Needless to say we welcome volunteers to help make this work. Please contact me if you can assist.

Event planning is always a challenge for us; your cooperation is appreciated. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Visit www.northportyachtclub.org

We are pleased to announce that the Northport Yacht Club web site has been improved and updated. The current format is easy to navigate and provides a wealth of information. The opening page features a detailed calendar to keep

you abreast of NYC happenings. Hover over the date, and additional information regarding the event will display. Also available are the forms we use to maintain membership and operate the sailing school. These are easily down-loaded in .pdf format. We encourage you to visit the site and explore. And of course we are always open to suggestions that will make it a useful tool and a pleasure to visit. Our thanks to Walt Irby for his volunteer hours to make this a reality.

Northport Food Pantry Auction, Second Edition

It feels great to do something that helps someone else. Bayside people understand that. If you're trying to launch a boat, tinker with an engine, move something heavy, or figure out how to fix your cottage, it usually doesn't take too long for a number of helpful heads and hands to come together and get the job done. It feels good all around.

Last summer we capitalized on that spirit and found a way to combine a good deed with a night of wonderful fun. It felt good enough to want to do it all over again! Join us on Friday, July 9, 2010, for the NYC Auction to Benefit the Northport Food Pantry.

For the past few years we have been documenting the growing need in Waldo County for help in fighting hunger and malnutrition. The Northport Food Pantry does its part in that battle month after month. The number of regular users has increased steadily over the past year to about **90 families** every month. Food boxes include items such as canned soups and stews, canned chicken or tuna, frozen meat, powdered milk, peanut butter, pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned fruits and vegetables, frozen food, canned juice, cereals, rice, and fresh breads. In the summer, surplus supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables from local growers supplement the offerings. Between monthly "pantry days," emergency calls for food are answered. In addition to purchasing the food supplies it distributes, the Pantry must use its resources to keep its building operating: electricity, heat, snow plowing and sanding, trash removal, and the maintenance of the refrigerators and freezers all must be paid for. Pantry patrons include seniors on fixed incomes, single parents, and the working poor.

Last year's auction proved to be a wonderful evening of fun, music, conviviality, and fundraising. Items available for bidding included the handiwork of local artisans and craftsmen, gift baskets, gift certificates to local stores and restaurants, sports tickets and memorabilia, and services provided by talented residents. Once again this year, musical entertainment will be provided by Jared Alley. Please join us for another feel-good evening.

We need your help in several ways: **Donate items or services to be auctioned, *Volunteer to help, *Come and bid on the night of the auction.*

To make a donation, volunteer, or find an answer to your questions, please contact Patti Wright at familywright50@comcast.net, 781-326-0171, or 207-338-4023.

Honestly, you'll feel great doing a good thing and you'll have a wonderful time with friends and neighbors.

Friday, July 9, 2010. 7:00 pm. Northport Yacht Club

Treasurer's Quick Report

Account Balances as of 4/13/2010

CD	\$10,139.51
Checking	2994.04
Savings	7063.79

Total = \$20,197.34

Feature Article

Your Commodore, and his wife Penny, are quite remarkable. What follows is Jon's journal on a climb they did to celebrate his 50th birthday a few years ago. If you find yourself short of breath walking up from the wharf to say, to the golf club, you'll likely get winded just reading this account. Due to its length it will be run in two segments, the conclusion to be published in the fall edition of the Tell-Tale.

Enjoy!

JON'S KILIMANJARO JOURNAL JULY 25 TO AUGUST 10, 2001

The trip opportunity had come up out of the blue, in February, 2001 at the Colby-Bowdoin hockey game reception. We were with Peter and Nick Krakoff (and my cousins, Jed and Francie Davis, who had climbed Kilimanjaro in 1971 while in the Peace Corps). Peter said, "Kilimanjaro's ice dome will be melted away in 20 years, how'd you like to climb it this summer?" I thought, 'snowball's chance in hell'. But after a while, Penny said, how about all of us? My parents had offered Pen and me vacation airline tickets as 50th birthday presents, so there's a start. When we ran the thought by the folks, and that the Jo'burg round trip fares would be \$1,500 each, my mom said, "Couldn't you go someplace closer?" The mountain trip would cost \$1,200 each, and an add-on safari would be \$600. So that meant, about \$7k for the two of us. Minus \$3k from my folks. I knew if I asked Penny for details of the expense, I'd get in trouble, so I simply asked, "Ok?" "Ok!"

Shortly after we told Pete, 'yes', I had gone to the bookstore for Africa maps. While there I picked up a copy of Hemingway's 'Snows of Kilimanjaro'. The title story is only 26 pages, but packed with power ("I scratched my knee while on safari. The wound is gangrenous, and there's no disinfectant. I hate women. I hate myself. I'm going to die. I'm dead"). Just about the only reference to the mountain in the story is a two-line newspaper clipping about a frozen carcass of a snow leopard at the rim of Kili's crater. "No one could explain what the leopard was seeking at that altitude," It describes Kilimanjaro as a 19,710 ft peak. Current reports list it as 19,340 ft (5,896 m).

Pete's brother, Chip had assembled a climbing group of eight:

Chip Krakoff	46, CFO of Africa Business Direct, from Vermont, and about a dozen other countries
Lanier Covington	32, COO of ABD, from Chicago, now of Jo'burg
Swapna Prabhakaran	25, ABD's web-manager
Sylvain Perret	40-ish, French, now of Jo'burg, Ag professor, runs 'Comrades', friend of Chip

Eric Tavernier	37, French, chemistry teacher, friend of Sylvain
Peter Krakoff	50, of Warren, ME, our classmate at Colby and U Maine
Penny Linn	50, of Belfast, ME
Jon Linn (Me)	49 (hoping to reach 50 in a couple months)

Pete, Penny and I spend two days with Chip in Johannesburg first, airfare costs being far less through Jo'burg, to Arusha rather than direct. Our 'team' travels together from Jo'burg to Tanzania.

SATURDAY: 28 July 2001 JOHANNESBURG INTERNATIONAL (1 800M) to MOSHI (900m): We fly, Air Tanzania from Johannesburg to Kilimanjaro Airport in Arusha. The plane is full of hearty looking vacationers of all ages, probably most headed to Kili or the other parks. When we de-plane onto the tarmac in Arusha, everyone scans the twilight horizon, looking for our ultimate destination, but the clouds frustrate our view. At 'ground transportation' there's a lot-full of trucks and vans from the various hotels and tour companies. We locate ones headed to Springlands Hotel, and scramble for seats.

It's an hour trip, in the dark over paved and un-paved roads racing among huge 'speed bumps'. The last mile from Moshi-town to the Springlands, the road is so cruddy, most of the way we're off the shoulder, still speeding, dodging pot-holes, washouts, and 'speed tables'.

We arrive at the Springlands in time to ditch our bags, and join 40 other people for supper under the dining canopy. Pete, Swapna, Penny and I are in Rm. 40, and Chip, Lanier, Sylvain and Eric are in Rm. 22. Dinner is a buffet of rice, banana stew, bread, fruit, chicken. Then we're sent to the lounge area for 'orientation'.

Orientation sends me into fits of stifled laughter. Paths around the hotel's grounds are 'crushed stone' gravel, causing loud 'crunching' sounds as people walk. The guide talking with our group is soft spoken. It seems that everything is quiet until he starts to talk, then someone walks past, drowning him out with their footsteps. It's like a slapstick comedy, he opens his mouth, and instead of words there's just, "CRUNCH, CRUNCH...". I move closer, but his whisper is still inaudible over the CRUNCHing.

DAY 1: Sunday, 29 July, 2001 MOSHI (900m) TO MACHAME HUT (3000m). We leave the hotel, and pile into a minibus for the drive up to the park entrance near Machame Village.

We load into the bus, and find more people piling on. There're 5 rows of seats with one on the left of the aisle, and two on the right. Also there're fold-down seats in the aisle, so once a row is full, everyone behind is trapped-in. Whew. So we are 20 in all. This quickly works out to be ok. In fact, for me the group of 20 is the highlight of the hike.

The additional 'team members' are:

Mike Christianson	20s, from S.A., now of Edinburgh
Roscoe Young	22, from Edinburgh, an HVAC apprentice engineer, plays hockey on Mike's team
Morgan Griffiths	30s, from Cape Town, government environmentalist
Merryck Griffiths	20s, from Cape Town, I.T. help-desk manger
Ian 'Hagsie' Hague	20s, from S.A.? Claimed to be food-critic for airlines. Really a software engineer
Lyle Van Orman	22, Salt Lake, UT
Kevin White	50s, Sydney, Big-game hunter
Jan White	40s, Sydney
Stefan Dippold	50s, Munich
Heinrich Dippold	50s, Munich, brother of Stefan
Jürgen Dippold	32, Munich, Stefan's son, test engineer for BMW
Annette Seifert	20s, Munich, Jürgen's sweetheart

We stop in town for about half an hour. We don't know what's the purpose of the stop, but we're holed-up by a roadside souvenir stand on a crowded main street. While we're waiting, Swapna snaps a photo out the bus window, at some colorful trinkets. A woman in traditional garb thinks she's taken a picture of her, and goes ballistic at Swapna. We suspect she's upset about having her 'spirit' stolen by the camera. But there's no common language, so apologies don't seem to work. Chip manages some Swahili, to calm her down, and off she goes.

Next we stop at the tour company depot to check in and fill our remaining equipment needs. The tour people recommend we purchase yellow 'plastic covers' (bags) for our duffels, to keep them dry. I wonder at this. (Also there was 'gaiters' on the checklist, and I didn't know what for—soon to find out.)

The bus stops a couple kilometers shy of the park gate, and we walk the rest of the way. The road is lined with homes, shacks, farms. There are coffee plants in the yards, shaded by banana trees. People have been out, walking to church along the way; some children walk along and beg or converse with us.

The Machame park gate area at 1,500 meters is crawling with people. Climbing groups are lined up to sign in. People are taking their last chance to use enclosed restrooms. There are hoards of people begging to be hired as porters. We gather around Chombo, our head guide, who hands out bag-lunches, and sends us off with David and Frederick, his assistants. We expect the hike to Machame Hut to take 7 hours.

Now I find out why we were wearing gaiters. These are usually for snow shoeing or xc skiing; today they are for mud. And, not too effective—mud covers my boot laces, the gaiters, and is creeping up to my knees. I start off, trying to stay as dry and clean as possible, tip-toeing around puddles. Then I start having fun and go for deep areas in the center of the trail. Mud is everywhere, and greasy—like fresh cow manure or chocolate pudding.

Always we hike slowly, slowly "polé polé," the Swahili catch-phrase for the whole climb.

We're hiking single-file along the trail when someone behind shouts, "Porter." We step aside, and let one or more porters pass. These guys are sprinting up the trail with impossible loads balanced on their heads. One guy passes with a couple duffels, wrapped in the yellow 'covers'. Another guy jogs by with a couple of tables. Another runs by with food and cook-ware, stinking of kerosene. Most of the time, you can smell the porters coming before you hear or see them. They tend to be dressed in throw-away clothing, grungy sweat suits, etc. Their footwear tends to be old street shoes or sneakers that look like they've been fished-out more than once from dumpsters; some still have laces. All this passes us by as we slog slowly along in new hiking boots, gore-tex jackets, gaiters, day packs loaded with just sweaters, water and snacks.

Pen's and my bags were among the last to arrive. I'm wet inside from sweat, and outside from rain. This was ok while under-way, but we are standing around, waiting, and it is getting cold. Pete offers Pen a loaner hat. I'm shaking like a leaf. I ditch my wet hat, and tie a dry bandana around my head. This actually helps a little. Finally the last five bags arrive, including ours. A warm hat and sweater make all the difference.

I've got a killer headache. Also nausea (burping up a taste of sulfur). I consider it to be just fatigue and cold—if I don't admit to altitude effects, then they aren't really there. The headache is gone by morning, then returns, late afternoon. This pattern repeats through the ascent. The nausea and sulfur go away when I decide to cut out eggs from my diet. Must be something with eggs and me. I've been expecting discomfort, so it doesn't detract from the experience, and I decide not to complain about it, nor let it interfere.

I've delayed taking Diamox (altitude med), and use of 'ski poles' until necessary. One day's hike, and a dose of humility, and so much for that. The first day's climb is more work than the 'gentle incline' I was expecting. Out come my poles for the rest of the hike. And I start taking Diamox—three tablets a day, in spite of its side-effects. As part of its altitude-sickness prevention action, Diamox is a powerful diuretic. This, coupled with the necessary intake of 4 liters of water a day, turns me into a water-pump.

Penny had said she wouldn't share a tent with me, because 'Jon snores'. I don't know where she got that idea. But when we start pairing up at the tents, she quickly claims one for the two of us. The rest of the ABD group pairs up for the duration as: Chip with Peter, Lanier with Swapna, and Sylvain with Eric. Eric snores like a lion; there might be other snorers, but he drowns them out.

At the campsite, the porters have already pitched our tents, their own tents, the cook and dining tents. And they're mostly done preparing our meal. Dinner is soup, pasta or rice with meat sauce (a theme to be repeated throughout), bread, fruit. Tea or Milo (a chocolate drink like Ovaltine). We toss our water bottles into a pile. The staff will fill them with boiled water by morning. Our bags go in the mess tent to stay dry and secure overnight. As soon as dinner is over, we get into our tents, and stretch out on camp pads 'like plywood' provided by Zara.

DAY 2: Monday, 30 July 2001 MACHAME HUT (3 000m) TO SHIRA HUT (3 840m) People roll out of their tents at 6:00. Breakfast in the mess-tent is burnt mealy-meal porridge, toast with peanut butter, jam, honey; scrambled eggs and fried sausage 'hot dogs'. We set off and the route is not too hard. Climbing, but not too steeply, so we walk at a comfortable pace. Sylvain, the double marathon-er dashes off ahead. We expect a 6 hour hike from Machame to Shira hut, crossing, early-on from jungle to moorland.

Peter and Chip together are a scream. They're both very bright, intense, and with lightning-fast wit. Between them they know everything (yeah, really) and they've been just about everywhere. Chip must know twenty languages. I can only hope to keep up and learn something when they get talking, or to keep from laughing to exhaustion when they get to joking.

Toward noon, there's a sudden demarcation from mud to powdery dust; my boots start to dry off. We have hiked above the clouds and can now see what we are climbing. Kilimanjaro finally appears. The face we see is clearly not the face we will climb, since the lower reaches are nearly vertical cliffs with steep snowfields above. Ours is a "non-technical" climb.

We're looking down on the clouds like from in an airliner. Some 30 or 40 miles away, Mt. Meru, a 14,000 ft. peak, pokes through the clouds. Our ultimate destination remains visible above us. We arrive at Shira Camp by mid-afternoon.

I lay-out some wet clothes on the tent, to dry, and it works fast—until the sun starts to set—then the temperature falls like a rock, and frost appears on everything. A view of the mountain-top, looking more like familiar photos, pops in and out of the clouds. We see glacial masses, and now the reality of the climb sinks-in.

The headache returns, but I expect it, and now I'm getting used to it being there.

Our 'team of 20' is starting to show itself as the highlight of the climb. At breakfast and dinner, in the mess tent, there's much talking, getting acquainted, joking and laughing. The young S.A. guys are a wonderful source of entertainment. They've come here on a whim, in a flurry of emails. They're young and hearty, and mostly geared-up alright, but they're a little surprised at the strain. This only makes for more fun. Roscoe of Edinburgh especially sends us into fits of laughter whenever he speaks up; "I moosta been oouta me fookin mind to go on this trip."

At Shira Camp we all hit the sack early. We hear violent yelling, late into the night coming from the cook tent. Turns out this is a cultural thing—if you're in a group setting, always talk loud enough for the most distant person to hear clearly, even if you're having a private conversation with your neighbor. The thought is that if you're talking softly, then you could be telling nasty secrets about a distant person, behind his back, in front of his face. So everyone yells, and no one is offended.

I have to get up and pee several times during the night. This is an exhausting effort: go pee one last time before turning-in, get gear settled, undress, get into the bag, then take a deep breath, and force the eyes closed. Then immediately have to reverse and repeat the process to go pee again. And again. And again. And each time the effort produces gasps of exhaustion.

DAY 3: Tuesday 31 July 2001 SHIRA HUT (3,840m) TO BARRANCO HUT (3 950m) : Our acclimatization day. From Shira we climb to 4,600 meters in the vicinity of the Lava Tower, and then go back down to Barranco camp at 3,950 meters, returning to sleep at the same altitude as where we started the day. We expect the hike to take 5 hours to Lava Tower, and then another 2 hours to Barranco. We are into alpine desert with no trees or shrubs.

The hike is a really strenuous climb. It's very steep, mostly a 'pick-pole' path up a vertical rock wall. In many places, the person ahead offers to take my ski-poles, so I can grab necessary hand-holds. Chip, Lyle and I pass the time, assigning old Hollywood movies to parts of the climb, and singing old rock-n-roll songs. The banter helps to distract us from exhaustion and discomfort.

We break for lunch at a windy spot and then split into two groups: one takes the direct 3-hour walk down to Barranco camp, the other to take a longer route by way of the Lava Tower, a massive rock wall whose base is at about 4700 meters. This is nearly as high as the highest mountain in Europe, Mont Blanc, 4,807 m. The highest peak in the lower 48 U.S. is Mt. Whitney, CA, 4,418 m. Mt. Rainier is 4,392 m, Mt. McKinley, the highest in North America is 6,144 m. From Lava Tower, we can see Shira Plateau and Oehler Ridge to the NW and 'Little Penck Glacier' and 'Western Breach' to the east.

Eric plods steadily along, always smiling. He doesn't talk much, probably due to weak English, but he'll try once in a while. I notice he's pouring something into his coffee. It's 'Pernot'. Maybe it helps him slog along, and fight-off altitude effects.

From Lava Tower we start down, giving back the altitude we fought to gain in the morning. We're back into the clouds as we approach Barranco Camp, in a desolate spot, made spooky by the mist. Before bedtime, the sky clears, it is sparkling cold, and we can see Kilimanjaro rising above us in the moonlight.

Merryck looks ill. He has taken in barely a liter of water during the day and is now suffering from dehydration. By dinner time, it appears he is in a bad way, refusing all food and drink. This is serious and could be fatal if not stopped soon. Morgan goes to knock heads with him and assures us that he has started to take on some liquids.

I'm really proud of Penny. She reminds me of the 'frontier woman' I fell infatuated with, thirty years ago. She appears strong and steady, always plodding on with the leaders. But mainly it's that she's smiling a lot, being uncharacteristically out-going with our new 'family' of friends. And, she's not complaining at all about 'minor' nuisances. There would be plenty to complain about—disgusting outhouses, monotonous meals, wet, cold, headaches, diuretics. Yet still she's chipper, and up-beat. I love her.

DAY 4: Wednesday 1 August 2001 BARRANCO HUT (3 950m) TO BARAFU HUT (4 600m): Our morning starts with a scramble up the almost vertical Barranco Wall to an altitude of about 4 200m and the path crosses through the southern slopes to reach the Karranga Valley after about three hours. Before reaching the Karranga Valley, below 4 000m where lunch is served, we pass through a few valleys offering great views of Heim, Kersten and Decken glaciers which form the Southern Ice fields. The last water stop on the route is at lunch in Karranga Valley. After lunch we continue to hike southeasterly to the junction before turning north for a 4 hours hike to Barafu camp (4 600m). It is clear and we can see the Saddle and Mawenzi (5 149m) in the east.

Part way up the Barranco wall, I see Roscoe sitting on a rock. "This is the worst fookin' day of me life. I've been on a rolling deck on the North Sea, holding two pieces of steel while a bloke welded them together. I've fallen into the North Sea. This is worse than any 'o that. I just finished a tantrum—crying for me mum... Ok. I'm better now, let's

push on.” We talk for a while. He tells me Sean Connery is still the most popular man with the ladies in Scotland. We discuss which of the Bond movies was his best. I tell him I recently learned that Connery had gone bald before even starting to film “Dr. No”, and we march on.

The climb out of Karranga valley is a desolate moonscape. Sylvain picks up a dish-shaped stone, and describes it is a fragment of a volcanic bomb. He explains that a spherical drop of lava-spray solidified before falling to the ground, where it shattered. After a while we find that we’re walking on a bed of these remnants. The ‘volcanic bomb’ fragments sound like just so many shards of glass under our boots.

Sylvain is ahead, as always, though today he is staying with the group. He and I march together for a while and talk about running, marathons, the ‘comrades’ double marathon, and his life in SA. He’s a wealth of knowledge about volcanic geologic formations and debris. At dinner, Sylvain apologizes for being impatient with the guides. He is comfortable enough to be candid about this in public, a clear sign that the ‘group’ has become a ‘close family’. He says he had bad-mouthed the guides this morning, for holding us back, but now he realizes that the polé polé pace is necessary, and in everyone’s best interest. Merryck, apparently recovered, keeps pace. It takes another hour and a half to get to camp from where we first spied it, but again we are feeling good and a little proud at having finished so strongly.

Barafu hut (4 600m) is a rock-pile situated on an exposed and dangerous ridge making it necessary to familiarize ourselves with the terrain before dark to avoid accidents. Tents are pitched in impossible clearings among the rocks, on the side of a steep slope. Just entering the door of the mess tent is a ‘sideways squeeze’ between boulders. Scrambling among tents and outhouses is treacherous.

At dinner, Chombo steps to the door of the tent to give us instructions for the next day. Everyone is excited; we can hardly quiet-down to hear him. He tells us, before bed we should prepare our gear for the summit climb. It will be cold, so wear warm clothes, but carry extra, since the temperature will fall as we climb. It will be coldest at 5:00. To save weight in the day-packs, carry only 2 liters of water. (This will not be enough.) The guides will wake us at 11. We’ll have tea, then hit the trail.

We scramble to our tents in silent anticipation.

To be continued in the fall

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