

People The Mississauga News

Climber makes scaling world's highest peak a family affair

What's the hardest part of climbing Mount Everest?

It's got to be getting back down once you've reached the summit. At least, that's what Alan Mallory found after reaching the top of the 29,000-foot tall mountain earlier this month.

"The biggest scares came on the way down," Mallory, 23, told the audience who came to hear him speak at Monday night's meeting of the Port Credit Toastmasters club at the Lorne Park library.

Mallory said he ran out of oxygen shortly after reaching the

zenith of the world's tallest mountain. His tanks were empty as he descended from a 40-foot slab of rock known as Hillary Step, almost at the very top of Mount Everest.

Mallory began to lose control of his limbs due to the lack of oxygen and he could barely hold onto the ropes that kept him from tumbling off the side of the mountain. He knew an extrication would be nearly impossible at that altitude.

"A rescue from that high is a shot in the dark," he said.

However, Mallory's Sherpa, or guide, gave him his last bottle of oxygen that allowed Mallory to continue down the mountain.

"He probably saved my life," said Mallory, who works in Mississauga.

Regardless of the harrowing ordeal after reaching the top, Mallory had many happier memories of the trip. After all, he had his family with him.

Mallory's mom and dad, Barbara and Dan, older brother Adam and sister Laura went along for the ride, so to speak. The whole family, except for Barbara, made it to the top of the mountain.

"For all of us, it was a lifelong goal," said Mallory, who posed for a picture holding the Toastmasters flag when he reached the top.

Although Mallory spoke with a wry sense of humour about his trip, there were many moments of doubt and danger during the climb. He walked past dead bodies frozen to the ground, experienced debilitating illness and suffered headaches from oxygen deprivation.

"Your body is exhausted and your mind is exhausted," he said. "By the time you get to the summit you've been going for at least 20 hours straight."

He lost 25 pounds during the trek, which cost about \$28,000 per person. He did learn something very important, however.

"I'm done with mountaineering," he said, eliciting gales of

laughter from the crowd. "I risked my neck and gave them about eight of my nine lives. But, it's worth it when you get back down alive."

For more on the trip, visit www.malloryexpedition.com.



Alan Mallory

School's NOT out for summer

School may be out for the summer, but that doesn't mean the learning can't continue.

Peel District School Board has tip sheets online for parent/child activities that encourage fun-filled learning during summer vacation.

Visit www.peelschools.org to find holiday learning tips under the Parents Boost Learning section for activities in these categories: bolster core learning skills, bolster core learning skills, get close to nature, get organized, teach good citizenship and understand history. There are activities for pre-school, elementary, middle and secondary school students.

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