

# Local man lives dream of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

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Staff Writer

Dave Booth had been longing for a little adventure in his life, and the Georgetown man found just what he was looking for earlier this month when he climbed Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro.

Booth, 62, a long-time runner, first began thinking about climbing up a mountain after participating in a relay between Jasper and Banff 10 years ago. The idea solidified a few years later when he took part in another relay on Mount MacKenzie in Nova Scotia.

He set his sights on Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, and over the years picked the brains of several people who had climbed, or attempted to scale, that peak, including Irene Caroll of Georgetown, who successfully made the trek in 2005.

When he finally made the decision back in December 2006 that he would do it, he told his wife Sharon Worob.

"She said I was crazy, but after that, she was 100 per cent behind me," said Booth.

The retired Northern Telecom employee took a part-time job delivering parts for Concept Ford to cover the \$9,000 cost of his trip.

Although he was already fit from running, Booth also decided to up his training.

He increased his running schedule and joined Power Zone, began lifting weights and using the treadmill and stationary cycle.

He also did some training even closer to home, regularly climbing the 19 flights of stairs in his building using his poles and wearing a backpack.

Looking back now, despite the successful trek, he believes he should have trained harder.

He was making good progress with his training, he said, but shortly before he was to leave for Kilimanjaro he was diagnosed with walking pneumonia, treated for that, and then a short time later his doctor diagnosed him with sinusitis.

Fortunately both cleared up before he flew out on Feb. 7.

He and the six women who made the trek to the top with him spent a few days becoming acclimatized to the area before setting off up the mountain.



Dave Booth of Georgetown relishes the moment of reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro earlier this month. Photo courtesy Dave Booth

He admits his first glimpse of the 19,340 ft. mountain left him "a bit in awe."

"We looked up and when the mist cleared you could see the mountain," said Booth. "It was like, 'oh my God', what did I sign up for here?"

His party, led by Paul D'Angelis of Mountain Climbing Adventures, began the five-day climb on Feb. 10.

Booth stressed the climb is actually not climbing, but is actually mountain hiking, or trekking.

Booth's group was accompanied by porters— natives of the area— who carried food, supplies, tents etc. up the mountain. Each hiker carried his or her own personal items in a backpack, and water.

As the group climbed they traveled through several different ecosystems— including dry savannah, rainforests and moorlands— to emerge at the mile wide-volcanic caldera covered in snow.

"As you're going, your apparel and your diet changes. We had three main sets of dress apparel. At the top you don't keep much down. I lost five pounds."

Booth said they spent about six to eight hours a day climbing, and was quite tired by the end of each day.

With the decline in oxygen levels the higher he climbed he said he noticed he was breathing heavier and it became harder to function. He took medication while he was there to help keep high altitude sickness at bay.

"The first Swahili term I learned was 'pole-pole,' which he said, means to go or pole slowly. 'I listened to them, some of them had been up there 50 times."

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