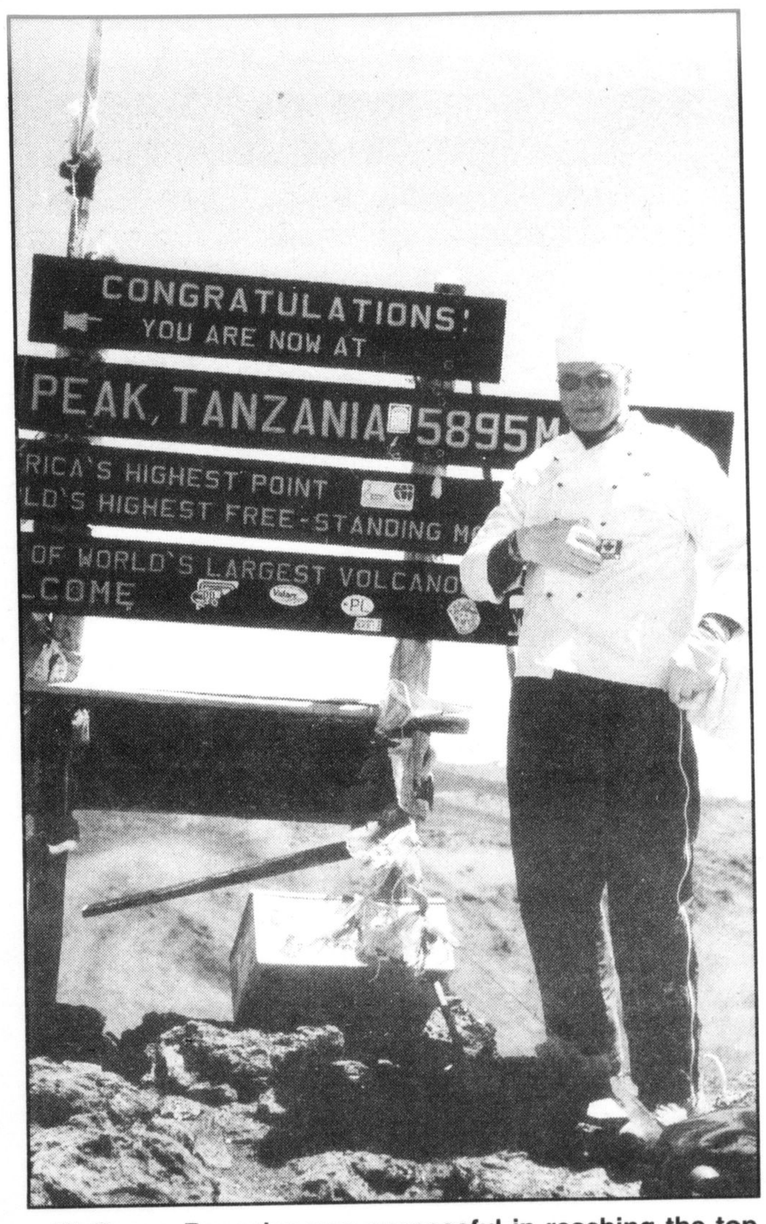
Former restaurateur climbs Mount Kilimanjaro



Wolfgang Roessler was successful in reaching the top of the world's highest free-standing mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro.

People said he was crazy, but that didn't deter Wolfgang Roessler from his goal

By FANNIE SUNSHINE
The Champion

Wolfgang Roessler said he would climb Africa's mountains after he retired.

And last month, he did just that.

The former owner of the Muddy Duck Restaurant headed to Africa October 1 and began his four-day journey up Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's highest free-standing mountain.

"I did it just for fun," he said. "The climb was very difficult, the air was thin and the mountain was steep."

He travelled with a guide and several other climbers, but some of them had to say good-bye before reaching the top, he said.

"To make it to the top in the morning, we had to travel in the middle of the night the final day of climbing," Mr. Roessler continued. "We had a light on our helmets like mine workers. The whole mountain looked like a giant Christmas tree."

Although he was successful in reaching Africa's highest point — 5,895 meters — there were times he didn't think he would make it.

"I was close to the top when I thought it was the end for me. But I thought to myself, I came here to get to the top, so I kept going. It felt great getting up there."

When he told people prior to leaving for Africa he was going to climb the mountain, most of them waved off the announcement. "They said I was crazy, and I said you have to be crazy to do this."

After spending two days descending the mountain, he went on a day-long safari and got up close and personal with a giraffe.

"The giraffe was so close and it didn't move. It's such a different way of life in Africa, they live differently and the food is different."

Before heading off to the continent, Mr. Roessler decided to give something to charity, so he approached several businesses in town, including the Milton Merchants hockey club, to ask for donations.

"I said I would only take the money if I made it to the top."

He managed to collect $2,000, which he's donating toward Alzheimer's disease research.

"I want to thank the Merchants and the people of Milton for their donations."

After leaving Africa, Mr. Roessler headed to his home country of Germany to visit family — another trip he can tick off on his list to do post-retirement.

He said his next adventure will be competing in a cross-country ski race in Ottawa in February.

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