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One day at a time, one step at a time for mountain climber

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His journey up the world's tallest mountain began April 1. Weather permitting, corporate consultant Werner Berger, 69, is scheduled to reach the summit of Mount Everest at the earliest May 19 to 21 and at the latest some-time in June.

If he completes this feat, he will be among the oldest climbers to have scaled the world's highest peak. The actual title of world's oldest Everest climber was claimed by Japanese adventurer Yuichiro Miura in 2003. Miura was 70 at the time, while Berger is 69.

■ According to his fiancée Heshie Segal, Berger, of Yard-

ley, Pa., calls her about every other day with a special phone that the alpine ascendants are letting him use. "He has been able to use a little bit of e-mail," she said.

"It's hard to have him up there," Segal said. "The weather has been fairly good." Of the 12 people who have started with the group, three have already gone home.

Berger, attempting to become the oldest person to climb the world's seven tallest mountains, is doing well with the climb; however, acclimatization is a little bit of a problem. "I think that part of the problem is that he's getting acclimatized but not as quickly as he thought," Segal said. "He's having a little trouble breathing right now," but besides that, he is doing well health-wise.

"He's eating alot, he's feeling good, his spirits are

good," she said. Segal noted she has been receiving many letters from people wishing him the best.

Recently she was in Washington and participated in a satellite call with about 60 people with Berger. They interviewed him and got to wish him well.

Segal added there have been other people who have climbed the seven tallest mountains, but many have done the hardest one first. "Werner's doing the hardest one at the end and that's pretty amazing at 69," she said.

Berger told Segal he is taking it one day at a time, one step at a time. Berger taught her that you take a step and then rest, take a step and then rest because taking a step at that altitude is very difficult.

"He's a real motivation," Segal said.



FRANK JACOBS/TIMES FILE PHOTO

Werner Berger, of Yardley, Pa., is on a mission to climb Mount Everest, the highest mountain on Earth.