



# He made it

## 69-year-old climber achieves his dream of reaching the summit of Mount Everest

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STAFF WRITER

Aided by good weather and accompanied by team members and Sherpa guides, Werner Berger made it to the top of the world at 8:08 a.m. Nepal time yesterday, when he reached the 29,035-foot summit of Mount Everest.

The 69-year-old Berger has returned to the mountain's Base Camp 4 and was catching some hard-earned sleep, team base camp manager Ellie Henke wrote on a blog yesterday. Berger is a Canadian citizen who spends much of his time in Yardley, Pa.

Berger has reached the highest point on each of the seven conti-



BERGER

nents, becoming one of the oldest people to ever climb Mount Everest.

The oldest person to conquer Everest was Yuichiro Miura of Japan at age 70 on May 22, 2003.

"I never doubted for a second that he would succeed," said Heshie Segal, a Yardley resident who is Berger's fiancée.

When Berger reached the summit at 8:08 a.m. yesterday Nepal time, it was 10:23 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Monday. It was

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## CLIMBER

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roughly seven weeks after he set off from the mountain's base.

Berger's achievement comes amid a series of record-setting Mount Everest-related accomplishments.

Samantha Larson, 18, of Long Beach, Calif., became the youngest person to scale the seven continents' peaks on Thursday, while a Sherpa named Appa reached the summit for the record-setting 17th time on Wednesday.

One British person claimed to be the first person to make a cell-phone call from the summit on Monday, while another was the first to fly over the summit with a paraglider on Thursday. Meanwhile, a Dutch national, Wim "Ice-man" Hof, was striving to become the first to climb to the peak in a pair of shorts.

The number of climbers reaching the summit annually has climbed from two in 1987 to an estimate of 550 this year.

For Segal, Berger's success is an example of a belief that they share: that one can succeed in realizing one's dreams.

"It's been his dream and he's living it," she said. "He's not letting age get in the way."

The couple, both of whom work as professional speakers, met at a speakers boot camp.

Both have encouraged the other.

"I get reactions like, 'How can you let him go?'" Segal said. "I am really supportive of what he's doing."

While Segal isn't a mountain climber, she did hike up Machu Picchu in Peru despite having two hip replacements and nine other surgeries.

Princeton Township resident Pamela Enslin, 67, doesn't know Berger but read an article about his feat as he neared the summit.

And she had one thought: "I think probably he's crazy to do it," said Enslin, whose husband, Bill Enslin, is Princeton Township's former deputy mayor.

Berger "is probably pushing himself to stay young," she said. Some retirement-age women look for the fountain of youth in plastic surgery, she said. For some men, that fountain springs from a new red sports car or a thrill-seeking adventure like a trek to the top of Everest.

"It's a strange thing to want to do. It's the ultimate test of one's abilities," no matter the age, Pamela Enslin said.

"God bless him. It's a tribute to the human spirit," she said.

Both Berger and Segal are working on books. His will be related to the Everest climb, while hers is on "jetnetting," which she describes as an alternative to networking.

Berger also is working on a film about his climb, tentatively titled "Beyond the Death Zone," which refers to the low-oxygen atmosphere near Mount Everest's summit.

While Berger's ascent was successful, he must be careful on his way down. There are more accidents on the descent than on the climb up, according to mountain-climbing experts.

Segal said the couple plans to set a date for their wedding when Berger returns. She hopes he is back by June 5, when she is taking a trip to Greece. They plan on making their permanent home in Yardley, she said.

The blog tracking the trip is: <http://alpineascents.com/everest-cybercast.asp>.

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## EDITORIALS

# Hits and misses

**HIT:** NJ Transit's new and faster early-morning River Line train from Camden to Trenton designed to get riders into the city in time to connect to the Northeast Corridor line to New York City. Service starts Tuesday.

**HIT:** The solar-power project created by Dave Cipolloni, science and engineering teacher at Trenton Central High School. Cipolloni arranged for mentors to guide his students, applied for grant money to pay for the project and got 10 students involved installing solar panels on the roof of the high school as they learn the value of solar energy in protecting the environment.

**HIT:** The renewed enthusiasm for Thunder baseball — thanks to Roger Clemens' rehab stint. Fans flocked to the stadium to see The Rocket pitch.

**MISS:** The less than standing-room-only crowds that attend Thunder baseball games when no celebrities are present.

**HIT:** The die-hard fans who haven't missed a game.

**HIT:** The inspiring accomplishment of 69-year-old Werner Berger, who climbed to the 29,035-foot summit of Mount Everest this week. Berger, who spends much of his time in Yardley, Pa., has reached the highest point on each of the seven continents, becoming

one of the oldest persons to ever climb Mount Everest.

**HIT:** The heroes who responded to a house fire in Trenton, where a woman and her children were trapped on the roof. Two contractors and two local residents grabbed ladders and assisted the family to safety.

**MISS:** The resurgence of the coyote population in Monmouth County, which has resulted in attacks on two children this spring. Officials are looking into ways to reduce the coyote population in and around Earle Naval Weapons Station.

**HIT:** Mercer County's purchase of nearly 700 additional plots in Greenwood Cemetery's Field of Honor. The plots will allow the county to offer free burial space for veterans and their spouses.

**HIT:** The success of the 200 students in Trenton Education Dance Institute's performance, "Here's the Scoop," at the War Memorial. The students, in fifth through 10th grade at Trenton middle and high schools, have been rehearsing all year for their moment in the spotlight. Bravo!

**HIT:** Memorial Day — a time to remember those who have served and fallen in defense of freedom. Take a moment to remember our veterans and their families.

**HIT:** Memorial Day Weekend — the unofficial start of summer.