



Peter Heacox/For the Coloradoan

JIM DAVIDSON

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Gloria for 12 years; daughter Jessica, 8, and son Nick, 5; and two Guinea pigs Cinnamon and Brownie.

AGE: 39

OCCUPATION: Environmental geologist with Alpine Environmental and public speaker.

WHERE YOU BEEN: Born and raised in Concord, Mass., and after stops in Houston and Bozeman, Mont., moved to Fort Collins in 1986.

ADVENTURES: Rock and ice climbing since 1982, including three high altitude expeditions to Argentina, Nepal and Bolivia; has summited eight peaks of 16,000 feet or more and is scheduled to add Denali to that list later this year; co-led expeditions for the Colorado Outdoor Adventure Program; climbed 20 of Colorado's 54 fourteeners; ran his first marathon last year in 3 hours, 42 minutes and loves to backcountry ski and travel abroad.

Has Denali always been a goal for you?

I've wanted to go to Alaska since high school. Denali is the highest mountain in North America and has a lot of mountaineering history.

What does your family think of you going?

I was a climber when I met my wife so she is sort of used to it. She is very generous to take care of the family when I'm gone. They worry some but are OK with it.

What's the biggest obstacle to summiting Denali?

The weather. You are very near the Arctic Circle and it can easily reach 35 to 40 below at night and that's without the wind chill.

What's your training like?

I do aerobic workouts four days a week, lift weights two days a week and go on climbing trips with heavy packs to Rocky Mountain National Park twice a month.

Most exciting adventure to date?

Climbing in Nepal near Mount Everest. We climbed 20,000-foot Island Peak. It was exciting to be up high in the epicenter of mountaineering. Nepal is an exotic culture and the people are great. Every day is exciting and new.

Favorite type of climbing?

Moderately difficult rock and ice climbs at high altitude.

What do you get from climbing?

Going to exotic locals, the camaraderie and putting yourself to the test to see if you can return home safely.

How important are the team dynamics to summiting a mountain like Denali?

Extremely important. You could have a group of strong climbers but if you aren't getting along you'll likely not get up the mountain.

How confident are you that your group will summit?

We'll be prepared and have a pretty good chance depending on the weather.

Favorite beverage?

Gatorade.

What is something about you that most people don't know?

My dad had a painting business and I used to climb up and paint high-voltage electrical towers with 100,000 volts of juice running through them. I'm also writing a book about surviving a climbing accident on Mount Ranier (in 1992).

What was the accident?

A snow bridge collapsed as we were descending after a successful summit and I dropped 80 feet into a crevasse and landed on my back in a snowbank.

Do you remember anything about the fall?

I was absolutely sure it was the end. I had one or two chances to recover but couldn't hook the wall of the crevasse and I knew when we were out of rope that we were going for a big ride.

Any injuries?

I had massive bruising, a concussion and stretched tendons in my back. But I also lost my good friend and climbing partner Mike Price. He died in the crevasse fall.

Do you have a different outlook since the accident?

Certainly. Life keeps us so busy doing things but you have to pause and have fun because you never know when the end is near.

Turn-ons and turnoffs?

Turnon would be watching the sun rise from high atop a snowy peak. Turnoffs are crowds and rancid yak butter.

What's rancid yak butter taste like?

Bitter, greasy, like bad meat.

Final thoughts?

Take time to enjoy each day and take a break from your busy schedule to enjoy nature. Try your hardest at whatever you do and enjoy the journey.

Do you know of someone who is an adventurous type who we could feature in our Q&A section? If so, please write to the Coloradoan, Miles Blumhardt, 1212 Riverside Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524, fax the person's name and phone number to 224-7899, call 224-7743 or e-mail milesblumhardt@coloradoan.com

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