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## JOB SHOP IS INSIDE WHY CAN'T WE SORT OUT HOUSING?

# SA duo reach Everest summit

ALEX ELISEEV & SHAUN SMILLIE  
Staff Reporters



Third time lucky: Sean Disney

TWO SOUTH Africans watched the sun rise on top of the world's highest mountain this morning. Sean Disney and Vaughan de la Harpe had reached the summit of Mount Everest at 2am SA time (5.30am Everest time), said their partner Rene Hochreiter, who was forced to return home earlier after suffering frostbite. The pair stood on top of the world for between 30 minutes and an hour and enjoyed a window of "absolutely clear weather". There were no clouds and winds were blowing at a meek five to 10km/h. "I have never heard (Disney) so happy. He usually doesn't say much, but (this morning) he was ecstatic," Hochreiter said. "He said the sun rose just as they got there." Disney phoned home at about 6am, once they had returned to Camp 4. "It was the wildest day," Disney had said. With this morning's summit, Disney, 34, and De La Harpe, 49, join the Seven Summit club, which sees daredevils conquer seven of the world's highest peaks across seven continents. They are the seventh and eighth South Africans to conquer Everest, approaching the peak from the south side. "I'm very happy for them," Hochreiter said from his home in Johannesburg today. "Obviously I am also a little sad that I couldn't be there. But the mountain is still there and I'll give it another bash in a year or two." He has been keeping an eye on the weather over the internet; he was the one who spotted the weather window this morning. He said the two had encountered dangerous icy patches and had had a hard slog to the top. For Disney, the summit was his third attempt at the peak. De

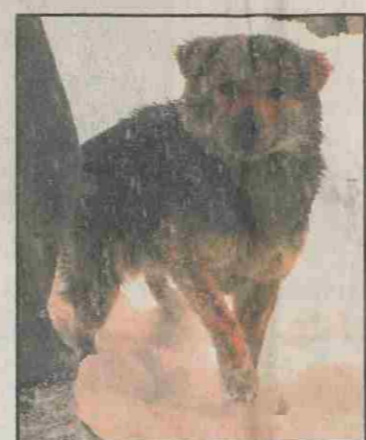
La Harpe was luckier, succeeding on his first try. After leaving home on March 22, and taking a week to reach the summit of the 8 848m mountain, the two are due home at the end of this weekend. Hochreiter said this Everest climbing season, which closes at the end of the month, would see about 300 summits from climbers around the world. Tragically, however, the same season has claimed the lives of 11 climbers. Disney and De La Harpe reached the top with two Sherpa guides, one of whom reached the summit for the sixth time. Disney was part of the Discovery team that climbed Everest in 2003, but did not make it. "The problem then was that they did it too early in the climbing season. He had to turn back at 8 400m because of high winds," said Hochreiter. In preparation for their shot to the top, said Hochreiter, both men had been carbo-loading and trying to get as much sleep as possible at Camp 4, which is 7 950m above sea level. "Bad weather thwarted Cape Town climber Ronnie Muhl's bid to summit Everest at the weekend. It is unclear whether he will try again."



New heights: Japanese mountaineer Takako Arayama, 70, (inset) leads other climbers on the way to the top of Mount Everest yesterday. Arayama is the oldest person to scale the world's highest peak from Tibetan.

## Intrepid pooch throws record away for hard-boiled eggs

SHAUN SMILLIE  
Staff Reporter



Egged on: super dog Shipton

HE IS KNOWN as Shipton the super dog, the intrepid pooch who almost conquered Everest but threw it away for a few hard-boiled eggs. Over the last couple of weeks Everest expedition news websites have been reporting the dog's incredible journey up the world's highest mountain. But unlike the scores of climbers who come to conquer Everest with mountains of gear, Shipton appeared on the snowy slopes of the peak with nothing – not even an owner. "Climbing completely unsupplied (no tent or food, no porters) is a dog called Shipton," is how one website described the canine. Not even a pup tent, someone added. The dog appeared to go by two names, Shipton and Mallory, named in honour of two Everest explorers. Nobody is sure what prompted Shipton to begin

his ascent of the mountain. Some believe he followed one of the many groups of mountaineers heading for Everest base camp, his mind probably made up when he was handed tasty tidbits. But once Shipton got started, he just kept going. South African mountaineer Rene Hochreiter first noticed Shipton at Everest base camp at 5 350m above sea level. "When we got to Camp 2, which is at 6 600m, I saw the dog again," said Hochreiter, who took photographs of Shipton playing with climbers in the snow. But how the dog got to Camp 2 is a bit of mystery. Besides, temperatures that dropped to -30°C, Shipton would have had to cross crevasses on ladders. Hochreiter suspects the dog got a little help from some sympathetic Sherpas. "I saw that they had made a harness for him," said Hochreiter. But Shipton was done in by his stomach. One morning a Sherpa cook at Camp 2 discovered that 30 hard-boiled eggs were missing. Shipton was the prime suspect and was taken back to Base Camp. Now the debate is whether Shipton holds the world altitude record for dogs. As for the pooch, his adventures are not over. The latest rumours about the super dog is that a millionaire Texan, who failed to reach the summit, has decided to adopt the canine and take him back to Texas. It's a dog's life.

## Climber's anguish after leaving man to die

THE first double amputee to conquer Everest has spoken of his agonising dilemma when he came across a dying British climber. And Mark Inglis revealed that about 40 climbers would have passed 34-year-old David Sharp as his life ebbed away on the hostile mountainside. Yesterday Sir Edmund Hillary, 86, the first man to conquer Everest, in 1953, blamed the commercialisation of the mountain for Sharp's death. "The people just want to get to the top. They don't give a damn for anybody else who may be in distress. It doesn't impress me at all that they leave someone lying under a rock to die." That would never have

occurred in his day, he said. Inglis said his team spotted Sharp sheltering under a rock as they climbed through the "death zone" last week – the area above 7 900m where the body begins to shut down because of lack of oxygen. Sharp, who had climbed alone, was clearly suffering from oxygen deprivation and appeared to be inadequately dressed in the -30°C conditions. He was "near death" said Inglis, 47, who lost his legs to frostbite on a 1982 expedition. His team members discussed how they could try to save the Briton. They shared their oxy-

gen supplies with him and radioed their expedition manager Russell Bryce for advice. But they were told nothing could be done for him and, concerned for their own safety, they were forced to make the tragic decision to leave Sharp to die. He became the 11th climber to lose his life on the world's highest peak this year. His body remains in a cave about 300m below the summit beside an Indian climber who died in 1997. Inglis, a New Zealander, said: "It's hard to stay alive yourself, let alone keep anyone else alive. He was in a very poor condition, near death. "It was like 'What do we do?' We couldn't do anything. He had no oxygen, no proper

gloves, things like that." Inglis said: "On that morning over 40 people went past that young Brit. I was one of the first. Our Sherpas gave him oxygen. We radioed. Russ said, 'Look, you can't do anything. He's been there X number of hours without oxygen. He's effectively dead.'" Sharp, who left Britain on March 27 for his third Everest climb, was an engineer from Teeside. He had reached the 8 848m summit but ran out of oxygen 299m below it and died nine days ago. A member of Inglis's team, Wayne Alexander, also from New Zealand, said: "He had made a mistake the day before. He started too late and couldn't

get off the mountain." Inglis, a Paralympian, uses custom-built carbon fibre legs. Sharp's mother, Linda, said she did not blame the decision of Inglis's team, "your responsibility is to save yourself". About 200 people have died on Everest since the first expeditions in the 1920s. The corpses are stepped over by climbers on the most popular routes. A manager at the Kathmandu company that outfitted Sharp said he had not taken enough oxygen and had no Sherpa guide. "He had taken two four-litre oxygen bottles. A normal climber would take a minimum of five bottles. I presume he wanted to go to the summit without oxygen."

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