

out with the other.

In the confusion of the storm, both ropes were dropped, as well as the bivouac tent, leaving the three remaining climbers stranded in the gully. They built a snow cave for the night and worried about the ropes in the morning.

By salvaging old rope abandoned from a previous expedition, they worked their way down until they reached a duffle bag they had spotted previously. It had been left in 1985 by four Chinese climbers who never made it back down the mountain. The bag contained two brand new ropes, 15 ice screws, several pitons (spikes for rocks), chocolate bars and biscuits.

The duffle bag enabled the team to return to basecamp relatively unharmed, where they recovered for ten days before their next attempt.

On July 25 they began climbing again and arrived at the bottom of Merkl Valley on July 27. It appeared as if another storm would hit, so deciding they might not be as lucky the second time around, they descended and flew back to Canada on August 4.

Blanchard and Twight left for Beijing, China on August 29 while their support team of thirteen

that were useless at high altitude. The yaks scheduled to carry equipment to basecamp arrived late, and the team was prevented from arriving at basecamp on time. Once there, on Sept. 11, Blanchard discovered that a duty jeep and driver had not been supplied for emergency purposes (as promised by the CMA).

"It was a very problematic trip," said Blanchard. "I haven't come so close to physical violence in a long time as I did with my Chinese staff. They have eleven words for impossible."

Further complications arose when eleven of the thirteen support members decided to fly home, leaving only Hank von Weelden, a U of A business grad, and John Morel of Calgary. This did, how-

ever, help ease the cost of accommodation at the basecamp.

The Everest basecamp is situated on a 'bolderfield' the size of twenty football fields. It was formed by an outwash of a glacier and is very isolated and desolate. The harsh wind that continually blows contains grit, making the basecamp like a desert in a sandstorm. Blanchard says, "You don't have to brush your teeth, you just smile."

Blanchard and Twight began their first attempt at the summit on Oct. 2, their strategy being to climb through the night and rest during the day. That way, they would be producing body heat during the coldest parts of the climb, enabling them to carry less baggage with them. They climbed

to 23,000 feet (from 21,000 feet at the basecamp) when Twight's feet got cold in the -30°C temperatures.

They returned to basecamp, added insulation to Twight's feet and climbed to 24,500 feet on Oct. 3. After a three hour rest in a snow cave the size of a coffin, they climbed another 500 feet.

Blanchard then began hyperventilating and was forced to descend. He had developed mild pulmonary edema, an illness that prevents blood from going through the lungs fast enough.

Their third attempt began on Oct. 12 and by the next day they had reached 26,250 feet. Blanchard fell behind Twight when he experienced mild cerebral edema. He saw his hands as if they were on a movie screen, detached from his body.

"I felt like I was going to fall, I was really scared."

He descended to 23,000 feet where he encountered an Amer-

ican group who put him on oxygen, and then he met the rescue team who escorted him back to basecamp.

Disappointed with his second trip to Everest, Blanchard left for home on Oct. 29, two months of physical abuse and \$80,000 later.

Mountain climbing at Blanchard's level is something most people never feel inclined to try. It is viewed by most of the average population, as an exciting but dangerously stupid thing to do. Blanchard tries to explain:

"Well, it's sex with death. We

### Blanchard plans to go back in 1991.

go up there because it's a high-risk sport. You really realize what you can do. (On Nanga Parbat), Ward might have died right there. But he said, 'I'm not going to die here!'"

"I learned a lot. Now I know you've got to have five to six weeks of acclimatization."

"There's a certain number of guys who are supposed to climb. I know we would die of boredom if we couldn't do it. You can get such a strong appreciation for your life when you come close to losing it."

Even though some of Blanchard's close friends have died while climbing, Blanchard will continue to pursue the sport. "My best friends can die now, climbing, and before I would have been really distraught, but now I think it's part of it. Death is part of life."

Blanchard is applying for a Nepalese permit for 1991 to try, once again, to conquer the highest peak in the world. With what he has learned, he sincerely believes he will do it.



"I haven't come so close to physical violence in a long time." — Blanchard.

men flew to Kathmandu, Nepal on August 30. The support team spent eleven days on a grueling trek through the Annapurna sanctuary while Blanchard and Twight battled with the Chinese Mountaineering Association (CMA).

The CMA supplied Blanchard, at his own expense, with an Asian officer (representing the Chinese government) and an interpreter, neither of whom had been to the mountains before. The officer's previous experience with foreigners was his supervision of a water-skiing event.

The officer purchased two stoves (with Blanchard's money)

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#### GUEST SPEAKER

**Mr. Nachman Shai** a prominent Israeli Media Figure was a spokesman for the Israeli U.N. Delegation as well as Israeli Defence and Foreign Minister. He now holds the position of General Manager of an Israeli radio station.

**Wednesday, November 30, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Tory Breezeway II**

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