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# First Canadian woman to scale Everest

by Brad Johnson

Sharon Wood, the first woman from Canada to reach the peak of Mt. Everest was in SUB Theatre Tuesday night to give a talk on her experience.

Wood, together with 12 other team members went on the Canadian Everest Light expedition in spring of 1986.

"I thought I'd confronted one of the biggest challenges of my life," she said of the climb, which lasted about two months.

The team itself was unique in that it was so small (the last Canadian team consisted of 60 members) and it went without the aid of Sherpa porters.

"We started with a modest budget of \$340,000," she said, indicating the enormous costs involved in such climbs.

Wood started climbing 13 years ago, in Jasper, and since that time, the sport "became a lifestyle".

Prior to scaling Everest, she had gone on climbs in Peru, Argentina,

Alaska, and the Himalayas. She even went on solo climbs in Peru.

However, Wood said she realizes the importance of working as a team.

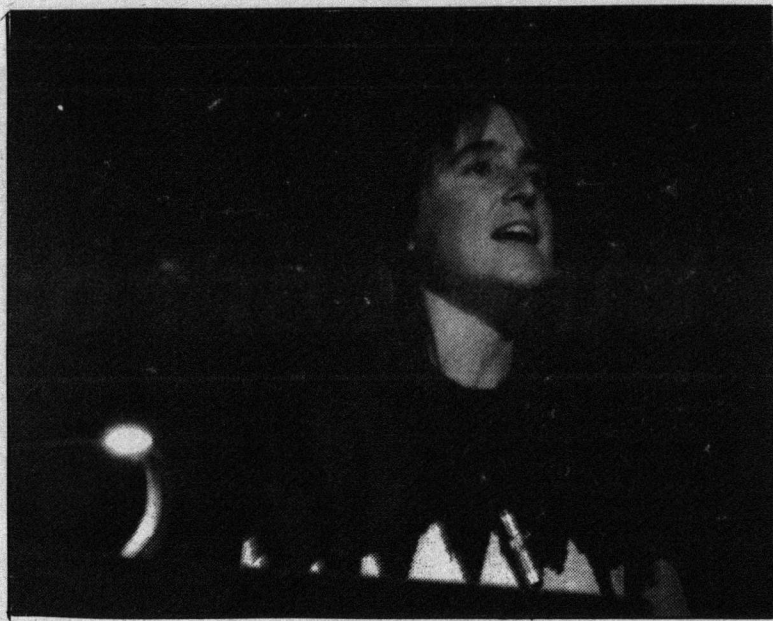
"It's tragic when the people who get to the top are singled out as heroes," she said, while the ones who worked just as hard throughout the climb are forgotten.

The climb was ridden throughout with all sort of hardships and danger, such as the "death zone", for instance, at 22,000 feet, where the body begins to deteriorate even at rest. Even muscle is metabolised for the body's energy.

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The time at base camp was "always a very disturbing time for me, because I got time to think," she said, of the dangers involved and the people who have died trying to reach Everest.

When Wood returned to the climbing, (two teams were taking



Sharon Wood speaks in SUB Theatre. photo by Paul Menzies  
turns laying out lines for the actual ascent), her fears would give way to exhaustion and a feeling of com- mitment.  
"I get a thrill from cultivating that kind of discipline," said Wood

about enduring the rigours of climbing.

"It's amazing what you can do when you have to do it," she said.

Although Everest is "a very beautiful place to be," her main reaction to finally reaching the summit was one of great exhaustion.

As for her being a woman on the summit, Wood said the qualification to be on such a team "really comes right down to the individual."

Her presentation was accompanied by a slide show of the whole expedition. The show included videotaped segments of the team enduring some very harsh and obviously nerve-wracking conditions on Everest.

One short video clip showed Wood and her teammates from a distance, braving severe winds and oxygen deprivation to lay out lines for the final climb, with a very harrowed narrator describing the scene.

## Premiers cool to more R and D

OTTAWA (CUP) — The provinces bungled an opportunity at the recent first ministers' meeting to improve Canada's performance in

research and development, says the president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Allan Sharp called Ontario Premier David Peterson's call to improve research and development spending "very positive, from the point of view of the university community."

Peterson called on the provinces to bring Canada's R & D expenditure to 2.5 per cent of the country's gross national product, a significant increase above the current 1.5 per cent.

"That would have been a remarkable development, if it were to happen, but the response was very disappointing," said Sharp.

Sharp said Prime Minister Brian Mulroney downplayed Peterson's roundtable proposal, and other premiers followed suit.

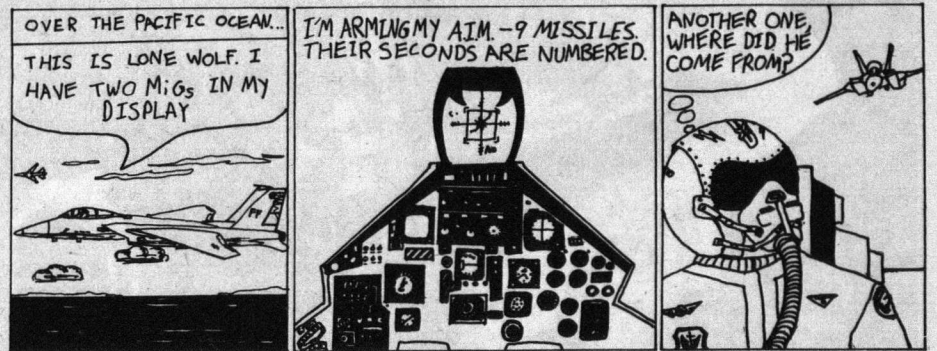
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"People may think it's just soft-porn he's distributing, but it's not," she said.

Davidson said Pattison, who owns Vancouver Mainland Magazine Company, is Canada's second-largest distributors of pornographic magazines. She also said that his companies have been convicted twice of violating Ontario obscenity laws.

On Jan. 7, UBC student council voted to oppose awarding Pattison the degree and planned to convey its disapproval at the next senate meeting.

Jake Griffen



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