



GIMPY

WINTER 2004



Amputee Attains Summit of Mt. Everest

Bay Area resident and mountain climber Tom McMillan led a successful expedition to the top of Mt. Everest this May. Accompanying Tom on this expedition was Nawang Sherpa, who had lost his leg in a motorcycle accident in 2000. Nawang became the first person with a prosthetic leg to climb the world's highest mountain.

Thanks to the sponsors and supporters of Tom McMillan and the Expedition Team, Nawang Sherpa has achieved his lifetime dream of climbing Mount Everest!

read more at:

<http://lindamcmillan.com/expedition/press.htm>

At one of the many press conferences he attended, Nawang Sherpa (photo above) shows off the high-tech prosthetic leg and foot that helped him reach the summit of Mount Everest, courtesy of Tom Halvorson, The High Exposure Foundation, and sponsors.

The silk scarves draped around Nawang's neck are called KATAS. Whereas people from the lower altitude areas of Nepal might drape garlands of marigolds around a person's neck for welcoming, congratulating, greeting, saying goodbye, or otherwise wishing someone good luck, the traditional Sherpa way to achieve this is to use a silk kata. It's a beautiful tradition!

What's Inside...

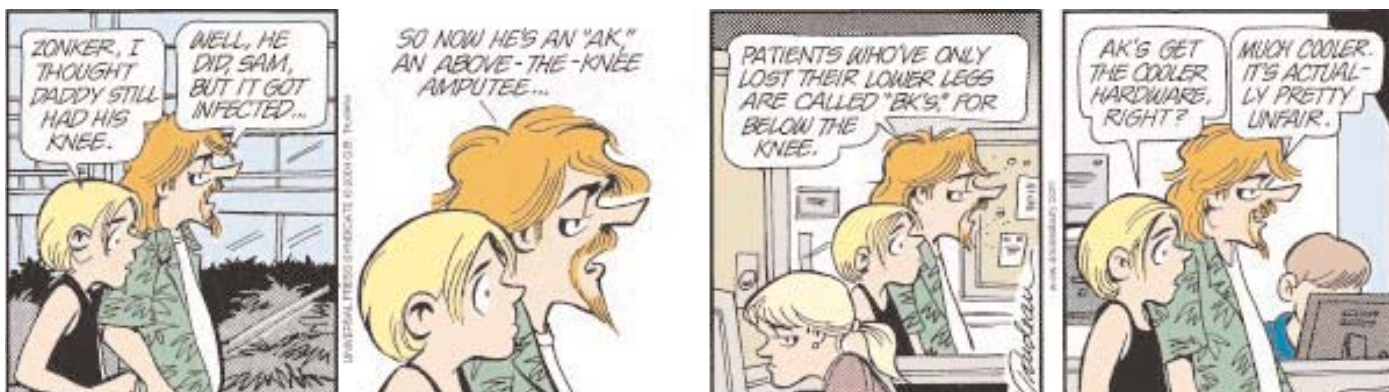
*Turn the page
and find out!!!!*

President Bush Keeps a Promise



Attached is a picture of one of my best friends in the Army, Mike McNaughton. We were privates together in 1990-1994. He stepped on a landmine in Afghanistan Christmas 2002. President Bush came to visit the wounded in the hospital. He told Mike that when he could run a mile, that they would go on a run together. True to his word, he called Mike every month or so to see how he was doing. Well, last week they went on the run, 1 mile with the president. Not something you'll see in the news, but seeing the president taking the time to say thank you to the wounded and to give hope to one of my best friends was one of the greatest/best things I have seen in my life. It almost sounds like a corny email chain letter, but God bless him.

CPT Justin P. Dodge, MD/ Flight Surgeon, 1-2 AVN RGT/ Medical Corps, U.S. Army



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 Dan's Story - by Jeanne Schwarzer

"I should be dead," says 36-year-old Dan Schwarzer. "Better to lose my leg than my life."
 In January, Dan -- father of 5-year-old Jake and husband of 34-year-old Shirl -- was in a car accident that involved a semi-truck and the corvette in which he and his friend Mike were riding. Both he and Mike survived but doctors at Lancaster General Hospital told Dan it would be difficult, if not impossible, to save his right foot. It would require numerous skin grafts and operations that could take over a year. Dan, who owns Danz Driveline, a transmission repair business in Honey Brook, Pa., agreed to have his right leg amputated below the knee so that he could quickly get back to his life. "I didn't have time to go through a bunch of surgeries and have it not work out anyway," he says.

After the surgery, Dan's sister discovered Stumps R Us online and contacted founder Dan Sorkin, who started the whimsical support group for amputees in 1988 after dealing with his own amputation. Dan laughed when he heard the name and was happy to read Sorkin's quick email response to his sister's brief tale of her brother's ordeal:

"Your brother Dan has the right (and only) attitude he can have. He is obviously an optimistic, bright realist who navigates through life effortlessly," wrote Sorkin.

In February Dan's first issue of the Stumps 'R Us quarterly newsletter arrived and Dan was happy to see a rollerskater on the cover. An avid skater in high school, Dan had been getting his son Jake interested in skating by taking him regularly to a nearby rink prior to the accident. "Everyone's been telling me I'll never skate again," says Dan, with a twinkle in his eye as he sat on his black living room sofa in his single-story home. A pillow elevated his stump which was covered by the leg of his jeans so that it looked like he had only lost his foot. "Nothing's impossible."

Like Dan, his wife Shirl has a very positive attitude about the situation. "I'm just grateful not to be a widow," she says. "It's so good to still have a husband."

Now during the week, Dan can be found out in his transmission shop garage and office overseeing the work of his three mechanics. "I guess it's made me a better manager," he says of losing his leg. "Now when there's a problem in the garage I fix it in a managerial way -- instead of jumping in and doing it myself. I call the customer, get a rental car and let the guys do it. I had been going to seminars where they said to get out of the shop and let the employees do the work. Be a manager. But when I had two legs I couldn't do that. I had to always jump in. Now I see that spending more time on the phone and doing paperwork is making me the same or more money than being in the shop." Dan now has a prosthesis and can get around pretty well.

"It could have been worse," says Dan. He could have lost his life, his hand, his mind, his face. A part of his leg somehow doesn't seem as bad. "My whole attitude the whole time is it's happened. It's over. It's gone," says Dan. He says he doesn't dwell on it. He believes you just have to keep going and living your life. See the next page for

Jeanne Schwarzer, M.S., is Dan's sister and is a therapist and former journalist. She can be contacted at jeanne.schwarzer@earthlink.net. Dan Schwarzer can be reached at danzdriveline@aol.com. [Ed - see next page for a photo of Dan]

Warning: this site is intended for amputees with a sense of humor:
www.amputeehee.com
Here are some of the items available, visit the site for prices and availability:



or how about a bumper sticker like the one below ?





Dan Schwarzer - (story on previous page!)

Chad Crittenden is a survivor. Now, he wants to be the Survivor.

by Janine DeFao, reprinted with permission from San Francisco Chronicle

The 35-year-old Oakland teacher, who lost his lower right leg to cancer two years ago, is one of 18 people competing to win \$1 million in the latest chapter of the hit reality show.

Already, fan Web sites have tagged Crittenden the "inspirational" player and a potential favorite on "Survivor's" ninth contest, which began Thursday. Two tribes, men versus women, are facing off in volcano-studded Vanuatu, a chain of 83 islands in the South Pacific, where they'll forage for food and shelter and compete in physical and mental challenges.

For Crittenden -- who was among tens of thousands of would-be contestants who sent in audition tapes and was among 800 people interviewed for the 18 slots, according to CBS -- being selected for "Survivor" is a dream come true.

"We're typical, fanatical 'Survivor' fans," said his wife, Dyann Crittenden, also a teacher. "We've spent the past eight seasons armchair quarterbacking. Now he gets to play out everything he said he would do.

"I think he's going to be somebody fans enjoy watching and can relate to and want to cheer for. And not because he's missing a leg but because he's a really good guy," she said.

Crittenden, who is prohibited by CBS from speaking to the media until he is either voted off the island on air or wins the \$1 million, grew up in Half Moon Bay. He participated in sports from soccer and bowling to mountain biking and snowboarding. He went on to UC Davis, where he graduated in 1994 with a degree in international relations with an emphasis on world resources, the environment and Spanish. After working with kids in after-school and summer programs, he took a job heading a bilingual tutoring program in San Jose and later taught a bilingual second-grade class. In 1997, he began teaching at an American school in San Salvador, El Salvador, where he met his wife. Two years later, they moved to Oakland, where they settled near Highland Hospital. They now have a 3-year-old daughter, Clara, and 6-month-old son, Trevor. Both husband and wife teach in the San Leandro school district.

"I think he's amazing. He's one of those very conscientious, skilled educators who bring something extra to the classroom," said Elvia Teixeira, principal at Washington Elementary, where Crittenden has taught a third-grade bilingual class. He took this school year off to be at home with his children. "He's the most courageous, uncomplaining guy. He's very sensitive to the needs of others," said Teixeira, who rescheduled the school's usual Thursday night parent meetings so people could watch "Survivor."

Two years ago, Crittenden went to a doctor to have what he thought was a cyst removed from the ball of his right foot. It turned out to be synovial sarcoma, a rare form of cancer that quickly metastasizes to the lungs. Doctors told him the safest course was to amputate his leg below the knee. "When the word amputation came up, it was probably the single worst moment he'd ever experienced," Dyann Crittenden said. But "I think he may have spent one minute feeling sorry for himself, maybe three minutes, and he started looking forward after that." Nine months later, he was back to competing in triathlons.

"He just impressed me as a courageous young man with a positive attitude," said Dan Sorkin, 77, a fellow amputee and founder of the support group Stumps 'R Us, who first met Crittenden in the hospital. "He's one of the nicest people I've ever met. What you see is what you get." Crittenden is checked for cancer every three months and has been healthy, but he won't be considered cured until he's cancer-free for five years. He has been working with specialist Wayne Koniuk of San Francisco Prosthetics and now has a prosthetic he can wear on both land and water. "He feels he can pretty much do anything," said Dyann Crittenden, though diving and swimming in deep water can be tough because his right leg is heavier and his foot is static.

(cont'd next page)

While Crittenden is eager for the chance to "show that someone with a prosthetic leg can still run, swim, balance and jump," he also is hoping that other contestants "won't just focus on his leg and will get to know him for who he is," his wife said.

Among those he's competing against are a pretty sheep farmer from Pennsylvania, an FBI agent from Huntington Beach and a South Carolina drill sergeant.

Although Dyann Crittenden was pregnant with the couple's second child, they decided the time was finally right for Chad to send his audition tape to "Survivor." They found out he was chosen two weeks after the baby was born, and he left his wife with her hands full when he headed to the South Pacific for seven weeks this summer.

"I figured if Chad could survive being on an island, eating nothing and sleeping outside, I could handle holding down the fort with a couple of kids," she said.

The show was taped this summer, but the final winner won't be determined until a live finale at the end of the season.

Should her husband win \$1 million -- she swears she doesn't know how far he made it -- the couple would like to start college funds for their children and maybe buy a bigger house in a nicer neighborhood, Dyann Crittenden said.

She said her husband isn't comfortable being called an inspiration but knows that he can be an example to other amputees, including injured soldiers returning from Iraq, that "losing a limb doesn't mean ... you'll have to be sitting down for the rest of your life," she said.

But "it's not so much about proving something to somebody else as about proving something to himself," Dyann Crittenden said. "This was his dream before he lost his leg, and now he wants to see it though."



Chad, a true Survivor!

> > > > A Message From Your, Almost Fearless, President < < < <

As I prepare to venture out onto the busy highways on my trek to Nashville, Tennessee, I wonder what life, God, and the ACA have in store for me. I am on my way to the ACA Conference to learn what exactly that might be, and how it might be of use to our group, and to others. I am really looking forward to meeting the folks I have talked with for so long in e-mails and on the telephone. I have been asked to be the Oregon State Representative for ACA, and because of that, and being a group leader, I have been invited to participate in a presentation given by John's Hopkins University on implementation of a support group PALS program. I will let you folks know what it is, and how it will help us at the August 15th meeting. Promoting Amputee Living Skills is the basis of the program. I know that I can use a bit of help in that area, that is for sure...

We have a well-known and gifted speaker coming up from the San Francisco Bay area, Mr. **Dan Sorkin**. Mr. Sorkin has been an amputee since the 70's, and started his 'Stumps 'R' Us' Group after finding there was a need for a group. Sound familiar? He will share with us his insights on how to develop a good life and amputee group through humor and... more humor, and hard work. We also have a few new members, we now have 23 or 24, and growing!
[: ~)

Come and hear what is new, laugh a lot with Mr. Dan Sorkin, and have dinner with us at our general meeting on August 15th, 5pm at Robinson's Family Grill, 645 River Rd. Eugene, Or.
If you need a ride, please call Brian and Colleen at 302-8275 in Eugene to make arrangements. Please come and help us show Mr. Sorkin our appreciation for his flying here to speak to our group and share his humor and story with us. Every one is welcome, just show up. See you there!

[Ed: *PACE is the Pacific NW Amputee Connections & Education support and education group. Nice to see Dan is so well thought of!*]

Please send any stories, photos, or ideas for publication to:

James Prial
1300 Irving St. #5
San Francisco CA 94122

or email to jamesprial@earthlink.net

Remember, you are a much better writer than you thought you were!

