



Vahsholtz Cousins

November 2013

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org/>

Cousins in Colorado, 2014!



THE DATE AND LOCATION HAVE BEEN SET for the next bi-annual Vahsholtz Cousins Reunion—Friday and Saturday, July 18-19, 2014 in Colorado Springs, Colorado at the same location as in 2012; the Academy Hotel on Academy Boulevard 1-800-766-8524. The rate will be the same as last time—\$89 per night (say Vahsholtz Reunion), which includes an excellent breakfast. Everyone was impressed with the facility; especially since we ended up spending lots of time there when the wildfires in the area resulted in most events being cancelled. We had lots of family time to chat and get to know each other better. Smiling sisters Mary Dillon and Ruth Klement will again be our hosts.

More details will follow in the Spring issue of this newsletter, but you can go ahead and make your reservations. In fact, doing so would be a great idea! For now, at least be sure and mark your 2014 calendars for July 18-19 to be in Colorado Springs.

Come early and stay late! It's a great vacation spot.

Hello from Beautiful Colorado!

By Mary Dillon

The 2012 reunion was at least a little disappointing because of the fire, but it was great seeing our cousins. What a special time it was to visit with Les and Carole! He was such a great blessing to the family, and will be greatly missed, especially with all the work he and Carole put into the reunions. You could say they were the heart and soul of the reunions.

I know that Les wanted us to carry on, so this coming year we are going to have a fabulous time. We're planning on going to the Iron Springs Chateau Melodrama. This is a wonderful place to sit and have dinner, relax and be entertained by Colorado's famous Iron Springs Chateau players, pictured above.

The Pikes Peak Highway is paved all the way to the top, so it's easier for anyone interested in driving up to see the peak views all the way to Kansas! You can also elect to ride

the Cog Railway to the top, or spend a day hiking up the peak on Barr Trail.

Garden of the Gods offers spectacular rock formations, with hiking trails, as well as horseback riding trails.

If shopping is more to your liking, Manitou Springs is still the place to go. You will find unique artisan crafts and gifts. One of our family's favorite shops in Manitou is the Olde Tyme Photography Studio. For an hour you can be a character out of the old West, or a 1930s gangster. This makes for a one-of-a-kind souvenir to remember this special place.

If gambling is more your style, the Cripple Creek Casinos are just a 35-minute drive up the mountain. Victor and Cripple Creek also offer underground mine tours, and lots of historical old buildings. Lake Skagway is just 15 minutes from Victor, and if anyone is interested in a day trip to fish, please let me know and we'll get the boat in the water.

For little ones, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo is a great place to spend the day. This is the highest zoo in North America. It offers a carousel, an aerial ride to see the animals and the great views of Colorado Springs.

We will be looking forward to seeing all of you July 18-19, 2014, so until then have a great holiday season, and love to you all.



Those of you at the 2012 reunion will recall that our dinner destination, *The Flying W*, went up in smoke along with so much of Colorado that summer. They'd hoped to rebuild but ... at least not in time for our 2014 reunion. Our hosts have arranged a terrific alternative for this reunion, and we all hope it's fireproof!

Our prices for dinner and show, including gratuity and tax, will be \$31.00 per adult and \$17.50 per child.

The menu includes pot roast/roasted chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans/rice pilaf, salad/rolls and a dessert cobbler. No advance deposit required.

If you're not a fan of melodrama, you're about to become one! Some say the life of a Vahsholtz is melodrama enough, but you ain't seen nuthin yet! ■

Here's a recent review of the Iron Springs Chateau:

We recently attended family night and the Grand Opening under new management at Iron Springs Chateau. The food was absolutely delightful with roast beef or chicken, vegetables and homemade cherry cobbler. The show afterwards was awesome! Second half of the show was hilarious and I haven't seen my husband laugh so hard in years! The price is excellent and the service outstanding! I would highly recommend to anyone visiting Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs or from anywhere in the United States to visit this very old and extremely entertaining dinner theater for a great night out! Susan L., Enid, Oklahoma

Reviews under previous management? Not so good.

An Obituary

Velma F. Peterson, 101, a teacher of Three Rivers passed away Sun., Sept. 22, 2013. Private family arrangements to be held. Arrangements by Smith Family Chapel, Exeter, California. Published in Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advertiser, Sept. 26, 2013

FOLKS, THIS NEWSLETTER IS about the life stories of our family; not obituaries (though Marge appreciates getting copies of every obit or other clipping that names a Vahsholtz relative).

We post Velma's brief obituary above as an example of how important it is to get the family stories in print while we can. Thank goodness we were able to get in touch with Velma in time to get to know her and tap the many stories and bits of history she contributed to the Zwilipp book, this newsletter and our own lives with the little visits we made to her house on the side of the mountain in recent years. Our last Velma story was in last spring's issue, on her 100th birthday. That's her above, as a child.

We'll miss those visits, and we're so glad we found the time to schedule them. ■

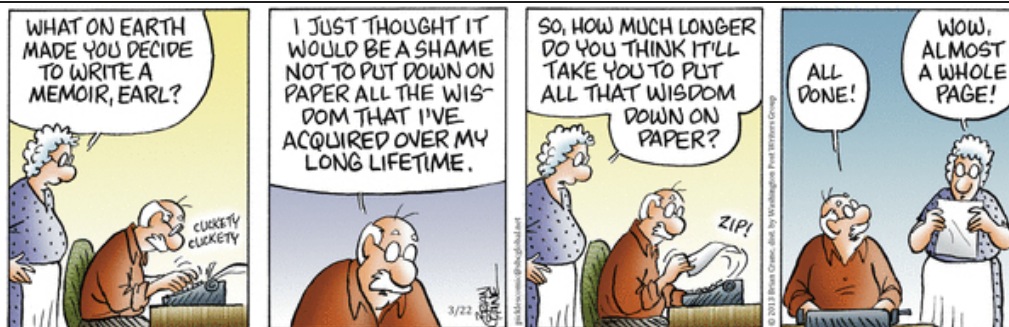


AND DON'T FORGET—it was Velma who found her mother's journal, which we've published as a book, **MEMORIES Growing Up in Kansas—1880s**. If you don't have a copy or are looking for a neat Christmas gift, there's time to order. Contact Bob or Marge (see back page).

Posterior Genealogy Part II

By Marge Vahsholtz

Pickles reprinted by permission



In last spring's issue we found Earl Pickles writing for posterity. The incorrigible old duffer is still working on his memoir. We the Vahsholtz family are about as diligent. Some contributed a page, like Earl, to *The Road from Zwilipp*, while others tossed in full chapters. Many just answered emails and phone calls, but it all contributed to documenting "the wisdom we've acquired" over our lifetimes. At our house, we encourage both family and friends to document their stories. Our coffee table runneth over with books!

Try it—you might like it! But before you go too far off the beaten path looking for ancient relatives, dig out those old photo albums and shoeboxes of photos. Identify as many of the people as you can; otherwise once you pass on the photos might fade to nothing and the connections be lost forever. You can

bet those links will be important to your descendants and the rest of your family one day down the road.

Starting with old photos is a great way to spend time with your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins near and far. Photos bring back fond memories and before long they're telling you stories about the people in that photo and even why the photo was taken. We spent many a happy hour with Bob's mom decades ago when we visited Abilene. We would get out the photo drawer and start talking about the people in the pictures and making sure they were identified. Sometimes Bob would type the stories on his laptop as she talked so we wouldn't forget the details.

We urged her to write down the stories she told her grandchildren. She did that by adding one or two to each

letter she wrote. I typed them and Bob edited them, along with the photos, into a book that has become a family treasure.

Genealogy gives you a reason to knock on some unsuspecting person's door and explain your way into their living room, and soon into their family genes. A perfect hobby if you have a curious nature and are detail oriented.

Digging out correct and sensible details can seem a daunting challenge. Starting with just a photo or a name of someone who appears to be family connected to the family line is like being a detective. The connection may not be apparent, but one thing leads to another. Lots of mysteries I've worked on have been resolved after years of waiting for a useful clue to arise. Many I'm still working on. Surely I'll never be done, and surely I hope not! This is too much

The LESTER M. VAHSHOLTZ

BIKE & HIKE

FOR ALS

Register here:

ALS Association
Fighting the Deadly Disease
Reversing the ALS Progression

TVMC
EVENTS

BIKE & HIKE: Bike from River Trail Station in NLR to Pinnacle Mountain, HIKE EAST to WEST then BIKE back for after party.
Shorter BIKE only option

Great available for purchase at
RIVER TRAIL STATION
1400 Riverfront Drive, Little Rock, AR 72214
Original design by Vahsholtz Cousins

bikehikeforals.com facebook.com/bikehikeforals webar.alsa.org

SAT. AUG 24TH
7am @ River Trail Station
Riverfront Park to Pinnacle & back.

The poster for this year's event

Memories of Les

Just a year ago, we celebrated Les Vahsholtz's contribution to this family, and many of you flooded his home with birthday cards and good wishes. You'll never know how much those cards meant to Les in his last days, as Carole read and showed them to him. Now we live with memories of Les. His family, Carole, Jenny and Tim, put together the following story, commemorating a larger tribute to our friend, his continuing presence among us, and the cause that came to mean so much to him.

YOU MAY REMEMBER that Les was with us at our last Vahsholtz reunion in Colorado Springs, in the summer of 2012. At the time, his main symptom was his loss of speech. His ALS progressed rather quickly from there.

(Continued, on Page 4)



Top: Jenny, Tim and Carole at the 2013 Bike & Hike, posing with a photo of Les from the 2012 event, where he was the "official hornblower." Center, Jenny and Timmy, and right, Les. Note "biking uniforms," Les in old work pants. Bottom, a more recent photo of Les on his bike, with helmet.

(Continued from page 3)

Les fought hard, but he lost his battle with the disease in December of 2012 and went home to Jesus.

Les had a strong drive to raise awareness for ALS because that disease (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease) which is diagnosed in approximately 5,600 people each year in the United States alone (two cases per 100,000 people). It strikes regardless of age, race or gender. Many people know little or nothing of the horrors of this disease until it strikes someone they love. While more is being learned about ALS each year, funding is desperately needed to continue research efforts as scientists get ever closer to fully understanding its underlying causes while also developing new treatments.

The average age range for onset of ALS is 30 to 70 years. While Les was at the end of this "window" when he was diagnosed in January of 2012, his desire to create awareness stemmed from his heart, for those struck down when younger; in the prime of their lives.

Les' son, Tim Vahsholtz, found a way to make a significant contribution to raising awareness and raising funds for research (plus support for those living with ALS as well as their caregivers). Combining the family's love of cycling with his talent and organizational skill, he created the new event in his community of Little Rock, Arkansas. It's a sport Les enjoyed with Tim and sister, Jenny (Vahsholtz) Werner, while they were growing up, and with wife Carole in more recent years. Tim carries on the cycling hobby to this day.

Tim created the Bike & Hike to honor Les, and fulfill his wish of raising awareness and donations for ALS. Les attended the first Bike & Hike last year (2012), and was the honorary "horn blower" starting off the event, which took place in spite of pouring rain.

This year, the event was officially renamed the "Lester M. Vahsholtz Bike & Hike for ALS" in his honor. It was held in Little Rock, Arkansas on August 24, 2013. More than 150 people participated. Proceeds totaling more than \$2,000 were donated to the ALS Association of Arkansas. Along with Tim, Les' wife Carole and his daughter Jenny participated in the 20 mile ride, three mile hike up Pinnacle Mountain, and then a 20 mile return bike ride.

Les documented his experience with ALS on his blog: lesvahsholtz.org More information about the Bike & Hike can be found at bike-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

hikeforals.com and facebook.com/bikehikeforals

As he had hoped and prayed, Les' website, www.lesvahsholtz.org, lives on and continues to inspire, inform and minister to others who are now dealing with this devastating disease. Thanks to his website, those who followed Les during his brave battle now pass on his wisdom and insight to others. ■

The Vahsholtz Website



AMONG THE MANY LEGACIES Les left us is the Vahsholtz website. What a blessing that's been! It spread the word and led to many new contacts, especially among the younger generations who thrive on tech stuff. Les put endless hours into that labor of love.

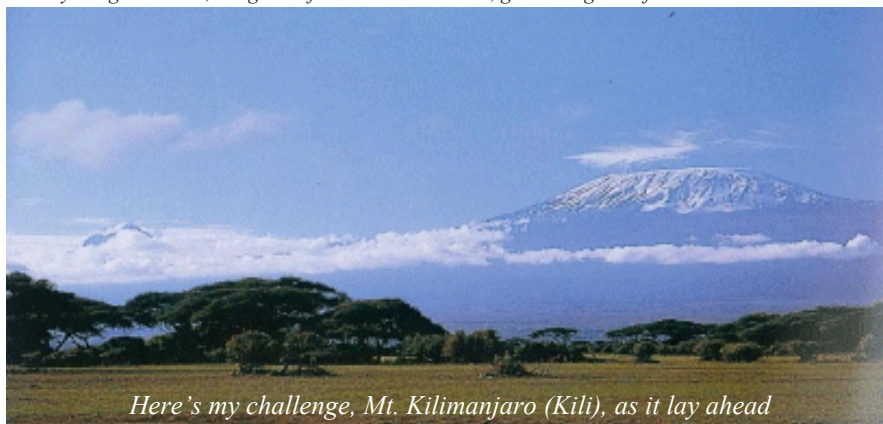
As most of you know, Tim Vahsholtz, Les' son, agreed to take over the family website. Those of you familiar with that website probably also know it grew like Topsy—Les' baby—and it got awfully complex. A daunting task to take over midstream. After careful thought, Tim decided it would be easier to start over from scratch and has been working on software to do so. He says it's essentially ready to go and should be up and running by the time you receive this newsletter (see photo from the revised site at the bottom of page 8).

If you have a landscape shot of something nice in the place where your Vahsholtz family lives, he'd like to put it on the site.

Contact tvahsholtz@gmail.com ■

A Report from Africa

By Ginger Richter, daughter of Ruth & Ron Richter, granddaughter of Fred & Merle Vahsholtz



Here's my challenge, Mt. Kilimanjaro (Kili), as it lay ahead

The last you saw Ginger Richter in this newsletter, she was in Jerusalem. The girl does get around! Here's an update from her current post.

I'D WANTED TO CLIMB Mt. Kilimanjaro since my first posting to South Africa back in 1999. It made a lot of sense to tackle this adventure from my current posting in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) because the city is already at nearly 8,000 feet altitude, so that was in my favor.

The two-hour flight made it time and cost-effective. Now was the time! I flew from Addis to Arusha (Kilimanjaro Int'l Airport), Tanzania on December 20 to begin climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro the next day.

Day 1 – My climbing crew consisted of Simon (70 year old guide), Jared (cook), Aaron (waiter), Stanley and David (porters). After registering, and a quick potty stop knowing the next ones would be au naturel, we set off at 11:30 a.m.

The first day was rainforest and a hiking trail, a slow and subtle incline, four hours from start to stop with the point being to go slow ("pole pole" in Swahili) so you can acclimatize. I took my briefing seriously to ensure I'd be able to summit, so I walked 2-4 steps behind Simon, and stepped exactly where he did. We passed beautiful waterfalls and streams and I enjoyed hearing the birds and the wind whistling through the trees. It started raining and thundering just as we arrived at Mandara Huts at 6,000 feet (see photo).



I changed into dry warmer clothes and Aaron brought me a basin of hot water to wash up. I laid down on one of the pallets with the door open and watched the rain. Aaron returned to say tea was ready, so I bundled up and went to the big A-frame dining area and found a plate of popcorn waiting! The sun came out and there was a beautiful rainbow over the valley that I could see from one end to the other. I laid down for 45 minutes and then it was time for dinner. Back to the dining A-frame, and not hungry, I found MY spot marked by a pink checkered tablecloth and had a huge meal. So far I had no ill-effects since I was at the same altitude as Addis. It rained most of the night.

Day 2 – At 5:50 a.m. I stood on my stoop brushing my teeth watching the teams of porters and waiters hustling and bustling about camp. It was amazing to see them coming up a separate porter's road carrying my huge duffel bag of climbing gear on their heads (max 33 lbs), their own backpack of what they required for themselves, and then all sorts of other items tied anywhere they could find a place to put it on their gear. They don't mess around

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

and really hustle at a grueling pace, with all that load, and in all manner of weather conditions. I immediately thought, "I'm not paying them enough."

Everyone greets everyone — "jambo" (hello) and karibu" (welcome). Porters coming down ask, "How are you?" Later Simon made a big deal of pointing out how they ask how you're doing, but you've just started and haven't even summited yet, shouldn't those going up be asking those coming down how THEY'RE doing? He thought it was a hilarious concept.

Wildlife on Kili is virtually nil above the tree line, but when we stopped for lunch there were Four-Striped Grass Mouse looking for food. Later the heavens let loose and we got drenched. Simon said, "five or ten minutes more." Sure enough we popped around a corner and there were the huts. I was relieved and wanted out of my wet clothes.

We arrived at 1:30 after a five-hour trekking day. Horombo Huts sit at 12,340 feet. The huts were exactly the same as at Mandara the day before (see photo below).



The toilet in the outhouse has now gone from a full-fledged proper toilet to one at half height and with no seat. Simon informed me we made good time that day. I'm sick of the food and have three days to go.

Day 3 — Up at 5:00 a.m. and still no altitude or other issues, but my breathing is heavy with any movement and only calms at night after I've laid down for awhile. We were on the trail by 8:00 a.m. Though Seamus had told me to let Simon know if I wanted to take the Upper Route (steeper, one kilometer longer, but prettier) or Lower Route (shorter, flatter, uglier, and the route the

porters take). Simon decided without discussion that we were taking the Upper Route.

This is alpine desert terrain and would be a 10.16 kilometer hike. The day started out warm and sunny, but as we neared the fork turnoff for Mt. Mwenzi, the wind picked up and the temps dropped so I stopped to add layers. The terrain changed about halfway to desolate desert, for miles on end.

We'd passed no one and all my fellow climbers had elected the weenie Lower Route. We turned towards Kili, and I spent the rest of the day walking towards it, seemingly making no headway in getting closer, and we were soon pelted with the tiniest hail I'd ever seen.

By now I can see in the FAR distance where the Lower Route meets up at a junction with the Upper Route and can just make out white bobbing movement (the porters). We've been able to see Kibo Huts for miles now, but it was another 45-minute climb after we'd been walking on flat desert for miles.

We arrived around 3:00 p.m. just as it started snowing. Simon showed me to my room (photo below) which I shared with another couple and a young Korean gal (Jay). Kibo Huts sit at 16,000 feet.



The temps have dropped, I'm soaked, cold, and tired. I wanted to lay down, but Aaron brought popcorn, peanuts and tea. Do I have to? There's a picnic table in our room so I eat and chat up my roommates.

We all laid down and tried to rest and then it was dinner time, which I could hardly face. The same fare which I'm well and truly sick of and I have no appetite, but they're forcing me to eat to keep up my energy. Everything is heavily salted, to counter the loss of salt from exertion. I choked it down.

Simon came in to brief me for the summit climb. We'll be woken up at 10:30 p.m. to have tea and biscuits and start climbing at 11:00 p.m. so we can summit with the sunrise. Simon's going over all my gear like I'm two years old, laying it all out on the bunk above mine, in order of how I'll layer it. He tests me, "Where is your torch? Where is your water? Put walking stick HERE!"

I guess it all has to be at the ready so you don't have to think about it 'cuz you're sleep and oxygen-deprived. After mostly just dozing we got our wake up knock at 10:30 p.m., had some tea, went to the bathroom, and started dressing — three pairs of socks, hiking boots, five pairs of pants, three long-sleeved shirts, one "Runs With Scissors" sweat-shirt, one windbreaker, one ski coat, two pairs of gloves, one neck scarf, one ear muff/headband, one bandana, and one ski hat.

With my torch in hand, we set out into pitch black, with snow coming down on top of 3-4 inches already on the ground. The sky was SO beautiful this high up and there were so many stars! I can't see the summit (just as well), I have to watch every step I take, and I realize as I'm writing this that I was half out of it from lack of sleep and the thin air.

It all puts you in slow mo' mode, with the utter exhaustion of climbing. I had no idea what time it was, how we were progressing, where we were or what kind of terrain we were on because of all the snow. It was utter desolation. All you can think of is putting one foot in front of the other and that you have to cover 3,000 feet straight up by sunrise. It seemed impossible. I'd gotten a glimpse of Kili the afternoon before and it was a daunting prospect. It looked SO far away and so steep. At some point Simon was literally pushing me up the rocks we were scaling. I had no strength and could hardly lift my leg to hoist myself.

And then I heard whooping. I had no idea what it meant. It was still pitch black and I couldn't see anything more than a few feet in front of me. Then I turned and we were at Gillman's Point,

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

technically high enough to get the certificate, but most go on to Uhuru Peak.

We've now segued into...

Day 4 – Christmas Eve, Gillman's Point 17,043 feet. It's 5:15 a.m. and we've been climbing for six hours. Simon finds me a potty spot and I must've been totally out of it because someone said it was either 10F or -10F and dropping five layers of pants, totally exposed to that kind of cold, I never noticed.

We trudged towards Uhuru Peak, supposedly another 45-minute trek ... it took me two hours. I was utterly exhausted, couldn't catch my breath, and could only go about five steps before stopping to rest which makes for a long trip. I hooked my arm in Simon's for moral support. Two more steps ... breathe. It seems like we are walking just to walk, and getting nowhere. Someone came by and said, "Hang in there, you're five minutes away. As soon as you get to that curve, you can see the sign."

I think "Yeah, right," but this energizes me and I manage six steps. "Lord, just get me there. I promise I will NOT go to the gym until Monday." I round the curve and there's the sign! The sun has long since come up and it's gorgeous. We've been walking parallel to this gnomous glacier.

There are "diamonds" sparkling in the fresh snow and it's blindingly white and pristine. On the right is the crater, far below. I've been crunching snow underfoot for eight hours when I finally summit.

I stand trying to catch my breath, taking it all in, and how surreal it is, yet wanting to snap my photos and get going back down. I hug the sign wondering what the big deal is — duh! I'm standing at the top of Africa's highest point, 19,340 feet, breathing thin air, no sleep, no food, and have climbed steadily upwards for 3 ½ days. I'm totally fried. Uh oh, I have to get back down again.

I say "Let's go" and we start climbing down, back over the rocks, and boom, there go my knees already. It's gonna be a LONG, day. I'm already discombobulated having gotten up and

climbed through the night and I've lost track of time.

We continue down through the rocks and then hit the scree (like potting soil — same color and texture). You step and slide forward two feet. There's a technique to "skiing" through it. After 1 ½ hours I think I mastered it. Downhill and gravel all the way back to Kibo Huts with my neck screaming from constantly looking down for safe foot falls.

"I round the curve and there's the sign! The sun has long since come up and it's gorgeous. ... There are 'diamonds' sparkling in the fresh snow and it's blindingly white and pristine. On the right is the crater, far below. I've been crunching snow underfoot for eight hours when I finally summit. I stand trying to catch my breath, taking it all in ..."

Simon knew I'd fall asleep if I sat, so to rest, we stopped in our tracks. My knees were aching. Simon stopped for a smoke and I left him behind. He later catches me, that stinkin' 70 year old man. It irritates me until I remind myself that he's done this more than 300 times.

He asks what I want for lunch. Food? Seriously? The thought makes me want to vomit. He insists. I finally say, "Fine, what I REALLY want is for Jared to find me two pieces of bread and make me a peanut butter sandwich, no jelly, just lots and lots of peanut butter. And tea. Nothing else."

We finally arrive at Kibo Huts 3 ½ hours later and Simon orders me to my bunk room where four slices of white bread and a jar of peanut butter appear. I take a bite and have to choke it down. I have no appetite. It sounded good, but it tastes terrible. Jared and Simon insist.

I need to go to the bathroom, but know my knees won't allow me to squat over the Korean-style toilet in the ground. What can I do? Men have NO idea how easy they have it! On my way I run into another lady. We stop, look at each other, she smirks, I smirk, she says, "I never want to do that again." I reply, "Me either."

We still had to get back to Horombo Huts that day and it had started to rain. I bundled back up again and with no chance to rest, we set out taking the Lower Route this time. It was desolate and felt like walking on the moon until we hit the point where the path turns downward and becomes pebbles and rocks, treacherous to say the least. Now with rainwater streaming down too, it was like walking in a rock-bottomed stream. Simon had said it was a three-hour walk, but I couldn't see any signs that we were getting closer and I was getting angry from exhaustion.

My knees, neck, shins, lower back and calves were killing me and I'd been rained on most of the afternoon. I stumbled and fell, my knee bending completely under me in pure agony but I kept walking. All I wanted to do was go to bed. When we finally arrived at Horombo Huts I was asleep in minutes, after walking for nearly 24 hrs. Aaron showed up with the water basin and I thanked him (I think) and fell asleep again.

Another knock and it was Jay to share my hut. I fell asleep again. Another knock and it's Aaron again saying dinner was ready. I had no appetite. The thought of eating made me ill. I laid back down and dozed. Finally I got up knowing I had to make some showing or the guys would be offended. I stumbled to the toilet (yay, the half-toilet!), then to the dining hall where the power was out.

I could barely face the food. Simon asks what time I want to head out in the morning but says there's no rush and it's up to me—"How about 6:30?" I wonder where my choice was in the matter. Jay leans over and says, "My porter wants to collect my bag at 5:45 a.m. I hope that's OK." I make one more trip to the toilet so I wouldn't have to get up in the middle of the night (I lost my torch summing so I'd have to fumble around in the dark without it) and head to bed. I fall asleep immediately and sleep through the night.

Day 5 – Everyone's cheery and saying Merry Christmas — "Si Ku Ku" (in Swahili). Simon lets me lead. I'm bopping along with renewed energy, and can finally breathe again since it's

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

downhill and I'm not exerting myself much. My knees recovered overnight, but my calves, shins and neck are sore.

It's nothing though — "*I'VE SUMMITED MT. KILIMANJARO*" — I will begin to use that mantra like a cancer survivor.

Three hours later we make it to Mandara Huts just as Simon points out the cutest monkey sitting in a tree. I use the REAL toilet (heavenly) and we set out again. No sooner do we leave Mandara Huts and get back into the rainforest than torrential rains start and stay with us the remainder of the journey.

Simon hollers at me to be careful constantly as we sidestep wet rocks all the way down, mud and puddles everywhere.

At reception, I get my certificate and stop at the gift shop to buy the T-shirt "Done it! Kilimanjaro 19,340 Feet." Back at the hotel we gather on the lawn outside my room and the bar and I buy three rounds of beers for my crew. Simon's getting wordy. I'm getting tired. He's inspected my feet and is pissed 'cuz I'm walking around barefoot. He's like a mother gorilla looking for ticks on her young.

I can tell I'm gonna lose my left big toenail.

Simon gets the guys up to stand on the knoll and sing me the Kilimanjaro song, traditional after a climb, and we have a photo op as I receive my certificate. It's lovely. But not as lovely as the hot shower that's next on the agenda and positively blissful.

Here's what else I'm thankful for:

- Brand new hiking boots, never worn, never broken in, that never gave me any trouble ... I lucked out
- No altitude sickness or symptoms ... EVER
- No side effects from taking Diamox to help with possible altitude sickness/symptoms
- The physical ability to do this
- My huge stubborn streak that wouldn't allow me to quit

What an experience ... what a way to spend Christmas. In the end, it was a 60-mile round trip journey on foot. Let me leave you with this final thought:

Things that appear far away....really are....*FAR AWAY* ■



The Road from Addis Ababa



The Road from Zwilipp

Vahsholtz Cousins is published twice yearly, spring and fall. Copies go out to some 260 Vahsholtz families. It is supported entirely by donations. Those who supply email addresses get full color copies attached to an email, as a PDF file, which they can read or print as they wish. Those having no email address get a black and white edition mailed to their last known address. "Snail mail" is the biggest cost item of the whole Vahsholtz publication enterprise, due to costs of printing and stamps.

And now a word from our sponsors: Hello? ... Oh, that's right, we don't have any sponsors except you and your donations. And the good news is, the Treasury is fine! Yes, we'll accept donations but the fact is the generosity at the last reunion has put us in good shape. What will help a lot to keep it fine, is any additions or corrections you can make to our email list. Each mailing we send out, we get half-dozen bounces from those who have passed on, or changed their email address.

Our cost of sending an email newsletter is zip; nada. To a mailing address? A buck or so each. So, if your address changes, or you know of relatives not on our list, please let Marge know! mvahsholtz@gmail.com And if you want to make a donation, contact Treasurer Tony Vahsholtz avahsholtz@gmail.com or mail him a check at 1920 West Honey Dew Drive, Napa, Idaho 83651 ■