

# Climb every mountain

## Birmingham woman scales new heights atop McKinley

By Dave Varga  
Staff writer

Waiting for her group's chance to scale Mount McKinley last month, Sue (Murray) Dunaway was not very confident she'd reach the summit.

Only one man had ascended the highest peak in North America from this more difficult West Rib this year, and the last time a guided group reached the summit from that side was in 1982.

Then, there were the two Swiss men at base camp who hadn't made it.

"As we left base camp the news was not good," said the Birmingham native after she returned. "It was real depressing to me to see these big strong Austrian men who didn't make it to the summit."

This was to be Dunaway's second real mountain climb. An outdoorsy type who did a lot of camping with her parents as a child, the 26-year-old had just recently taken up climb-

groups of two or three, in case one felt. "I was surprised at the amount of ice climbing," Dunaway said. "I had a couple nights where I wondered if I endangered any of the other climbers."

FOR THE NEXT few hours they would set up camp, picking a relatively flat spot, then stomping out the snow to make it even flatter. They would put poles in the ground and rope off the camp area, Dunaway said, to make sure they knew where they could walk safely without sliding thousands of yards down the mountain.

Dinner was cooked from about 9 p.m. to midnight, including melting more snow for water. For the first week or so, they carried frozen meat and vegetables, which made their load heavier but contributed to better stamina than freeze dried meals would have, she said. "We're pretty sure that's what helped us," Dunaway said.

A few days later, they found and ate some stinks that the Swiss climbers had cached in the snow with a sign offering them to whoever wanted them. "That was probably foolish because we didn't know how long they were there or if they had thawed," she said.

They slept about eight hours a night. During her first night on the mountain Dunaway said she was the most exhausted, partly because they hadn't used any food supplies yet. After that, she said, she got stronger and eventually lost 10 or 12 pounds, becoming "rock solid," she said.

After 18 days of climbing, they set their highest camp at 17,200 feet and set their sights on the 20,320 foot summit.

They left camp at noon. At about 18,000 feet the other woman climber needed to be given a drug to help regulate her breathing and she dropped back with another climber.

"WHEN WE hit 15,500 feet, that was my wall," Dunaway said. "It just hit me all of a sudden. I couldn't swallow. The air was real dry or something."

She developed a cough and was becoming dehydrated. After some fluids, Dunaway was able to continue.

As they neared the summit, they had heard a radio report about a group having "trouble" on the mountain. Soon after, they saw a pair of climbing spikes called crampons hanging from a pole stuck in the snow. They figured someone had died there.

"I was so numb at that point. We know . . . but no one would talk about it. Why would someone leave their crampons?" Dunaway said. After getting off the mountain, they read that a woman had collapsed there just a day before they arrived. Since she couldn't be resuscitated and she couldn't be carried and the mountain is too dangerous for a helicopter rescue, she died there.

WHEN DUNAWAY'S husband, Craig, and other family members heard a local radio report about an unnamed woman dying on Mount McKinley, they made some quick telephone calls.

"I told my family, 'No news is good news. If you ever hear about a death, remember they contact the family first,'" she said. That didn't stop Craig from calling the ranger station until they found out it wasn't her.



Sue Dunaway climbed higher than she'd ever gone before.

ing. A couple years back she scaled a smaller Grand Teton in Wyoming and then took an ice climbing course in Colorado.

NOW, SHE was part of a six-man and two-woman team determined to tackle the West Rib, something as few as a hundred people had ever done. No one in her group, including the three guides, had ever achieved the summit from that angle.

Each carried backpacks, with 70 pounds worth of food and equipment. They prepared to brave temperatures of 40 degrees below zero; winds that can blow 100 miles per hour and altitude changes that can kill a person who goes up too fast or has the wrong body chemistry, Dunaway said.

They traveled 20 or 25 miles up the mountain, and they traveled most of that distance two times — carrying half their equipment up to a higher camp, then climbing back down to sleep and then going back up.

Their days consisted of getting up around 8 or 9 a.m. and working on breakfast until about noon. It took that long to cook their pancakes and sausage over one burner, then tediously melt snow into water for the day's drinks.

From there, they climbed for about six hours, sometimes straight up ice covered couloirs or gorges. They would be roped together in



For the climb, each member of Dunaway's group packed 70 pounds of equipment to help brave possible temperatures of 40 degrees below zero and winds up to 100 miles per hour.

Dunaway's group beat the odds. They all made it to the top of the mountain, took their fantastic, top of the world photos from the peak and climbed back down to camp by 1:30 a.m. Three days later they were back at base camp.

"It was the hardest thing I've ever done — but the best," Dunaway concluded.

The main reason they made the ascent was the weather — there were 18 of 21 "beautiful days," Dunaway said.

"I don't remember being cold, not really. It got probably to 35 or 40 below, as advertised. I think it's because there was no wind."

"Wind was never a problem. We were probably the luckiest group to ever climb the mountain."

In addition to luck, Dunaway was also prepared. She studied books and articles about climbing and the psy-

chology of survival; worked on weight machines, tread mills, bicycles and running; and she got a second job to pay for the \$2,000 in equipment.

AFTER SHE got home, Dunaway's mother repenned a version of Willie Nelson's popular "Mama's Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys" with pertinent verses

about climbers.

The song epitomized her family's pride and fear about Dunaway's obsession with mountain climbing.

Would she do it again?

"On one hand it was too good an experience not to. But I don't know if I'm going to top this. It's in my blood and I know I'm going to want to."

## Toledo: little town by the Maumee grows up

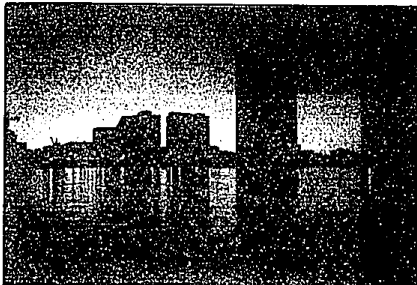


Photo by Mickey Jones

Toledo's expanding skyline is one clue that there's a lot more to do on weekend nights in the Midwestern city than there used to be.

Editor's note: Yes, yes, we told you about the great American renaissance of Toledo on these pages last week. But the longer we look at the "Glass City," the more excitement we uncover. Besides, where can you go for so much fun on less than a tank of gas?

So sit back, relax, and enjoy "Toledo — the Sequel," which we offer below. For an update on the Toledo Zoo panda exhibit, please turn to Page 5D.

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
contributing travel editor

The regular Friday night Rally by the River is in full swing, with cheerful crowds flowing across the grassy slopes, sipping beer from paper cups and listening to live music from the Promenade Park stage.

Where am I? Downstream, on the bank of the Maumee River, in the heart of Toledo, Ohio. It is only an hour's drive from most parts of metro Detroit, but when was the last time you were here?

Some people say that we ignore Toledo because of Michigan chauvinism. We don't recognize the city because it is across the state line in Ohio. Others say we're still mad because we wanted Toledo to be part of Michigan and we got the Upper Peninsula instead.

Whatever the reason, you are

missing an interesting, modestly priced day trip or weekend if you don't put Toledo on your schedule of things to do this summer.

IF YOU haven't been to Toledo for a while, you'll be amazed at the new waterfront. The sailboats still go by on the Maumee River, but now they anchor offshore within earshot of the Rally music.

Those once rundown riverside streets have been totally rebuilt between the High Level and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (Cherry Street) bridges.

The main attraction is Portside, one of those waterfront food-shop-play places that the Rouse Company has built all over America.

IF YOU want to do a low-budget overnight trip for two to Toledo this summer, three manageable hotels are downtown beside the river. The newest is the charming, historic Radisson, connected to one end of the Sea Gate convention center; the Holiday Inn Riverview is connected to the other end.

The former Hotel Sofitel, which has been taken over by Marriott, is a block away connected to Portside.

Weekday rate for a nice room at the Radisson is \$79 for two. Weekends you can get it for \$89.

An alternative to chain hotels is the Mansion View bed-and-breakfast, the first B&B to be opened

**If staying in a 101-year-old mansion is your style, you might want to try the Mansion View bed-and-breakfast downtown as an alternative to chain hotels.**

downtown. A five-story mansion built in 1887, so far it only has one bedroom available (\$55 per night, double occupancy, including continental breakfast), but it will have three by mid-summer and five by fall.

Bathrooms are in the room, not down the hall.

The address is 2035 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo 43620. Or telephone (419) 244-5878 or 478-8800. It is on the corner of US-24 (Telegraph Road in Detroit) and Collingwood, the street of old mansions and beautiful churches in Toledo's Old West End.

ADMISSION is free for the Rally by the River and a call to the Eventline, (419) 341-1111, will tell you who is playing and when. Previous concerts have featured oldies rock by the Turtles and local groups like the Haircuts.

You don't see picnic baskets at the Rally. Organizers stamp your hand when you enter to prove you are 21 years old; only then can you buy

large paper cups of beer for \$1.50 each. There are a few food vendors, but most people go out for food after early-evening concerts.

Most people move next door to the casual restaurants at Portside.

But if you want to do the shirt-and-tie bit, try Ricardo's on the lower level of the nearby Owens Illinois building, with a great view of the river. Or an intimate dinner at The Wine Cellar. Or an expensive but tasty feast at the Boody House (live jazz downstairs in Digby's).

Post-Rally music can also be found at Theos Taverna or Greek Village. All of the above are on or near Summit, within a block or so of the Rally site.

If you want to get out of town a bit, a Comedy Club is in South Toledo; or try Looma Linda's, a rowdy Mexican joint near the airport, where people stand in line for the famous margaritas.

Other local hangouts include Kelsey's, Nick and Jimmy's and Arnie's on the west side.