

*'People said you've got to have holes in your head to climb this mountain, and they were right' — Peter Lohead, CIBC Wood Gundy investment advisor, after gashing his head en route to the Kilimanjaro summit*

BUSINESS ESCAPES

By GIGI SUHANIC  
in Moshi, Tanzania

Reaching the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro requires a different approach than scaling the heights of the business world. The mantra on this 19,340-ft. slope is "pole, pole," Swahili for "very slowly" — a pace the Type A personalities on this adventure aren't prone to keeping.

A group of CIBC Wood Gundy investment advisors from across the country (accompanied variously by spouses, friends, a teenage son and one journalist) are undertaking the Climb for the Cure, an ascent of Africa's tallest peak to raise funds in aid of breast cancer research and for the glory of their mutual employer.

But as the trek turns into a nine-day marathon that 23 of the 25 climbers will finish, it will ultimately be about finding out whether they've got the intestinal fortitude to do what roughly 50% of those who try cannot — reach the summit of Kilimanjaro.

On top of fundraising and personally footing the steep costs of the trip, which are a minimum of \$6,000 per person, many climbers have been working with personal trainers and keeping detailed journals of their preparations. It's a level of commitment driven mostly by personal motivations.

Warrick Squires, a 58-year-old Toronto-area investment advisor and his wife, Dorothy, 55, are on board in support of Mr. Squires' sister, who has breast cancer.

Mr. Squires wears a pink breast cancer wrist band for the duration of the climb. The pink band is similar in intent to cancer survivor and Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong's yellow "Live-strong" bracelet, which a handful of the men on the climb have.

Riding in a beaten-up Toyota Land Cruiser that lurches along the kidney-rupturing track to Kilimanjaro National Park, Mr. Squires says his sister's cancer has spread to her brain. "She's been given two months to live."

A fellow climber, Susan Fowler, who was adopted as a child, discovered a few weeks after she signed up for the climb that her biological mother had suffered from breast cancer. And all at once, Ms. Fowler's connection to the climb deepened.

It turns out Ms. Fowler, a Halifax-based advisor, is among the power fundraisers in the group. She raised a total of \$34,196.

Among other top fundraisers are Toronto advisor Mark Newsome, who raised \$39,640 including \$10,000 of his own money; Kevin Barnes, regional director of Ontario for CIBC Wood Gundy, who raised \$35,149; the Squireses, who raised \$32,265 and Peter and Sandy Lohead, who raised \$30,750. The climb's fundraising total to date is \$295,000 for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

Besides being able to make a personal contribution to a worthy cause, the Climb for the Cure allows participants to meet charitable responsibilities at the corporate level, and score some professional points.

B.K. Milne, a Calgary investment advisor with the outdoorsy good looks of a Westerner, agrees that climbing Kilimanjaro is an attention-grabbing endeavour.

"This definitely is a much bolder statement," says Mr. Milne, noting he had already been mulling doing Kili but gravitated to the Climb for the Cure for the charity-work connection.

"A friend of mine asked me how I deal with the charity thing [at work] and up until this I didn't have an answer," Mr. Milne says at an altitude of 13,800 ft. with Kilimanjaro rising wondrously overhead. Rob Reid, a Windsor, Ont.-based investment advisor, perceives plenty of synergies in the climb, too.

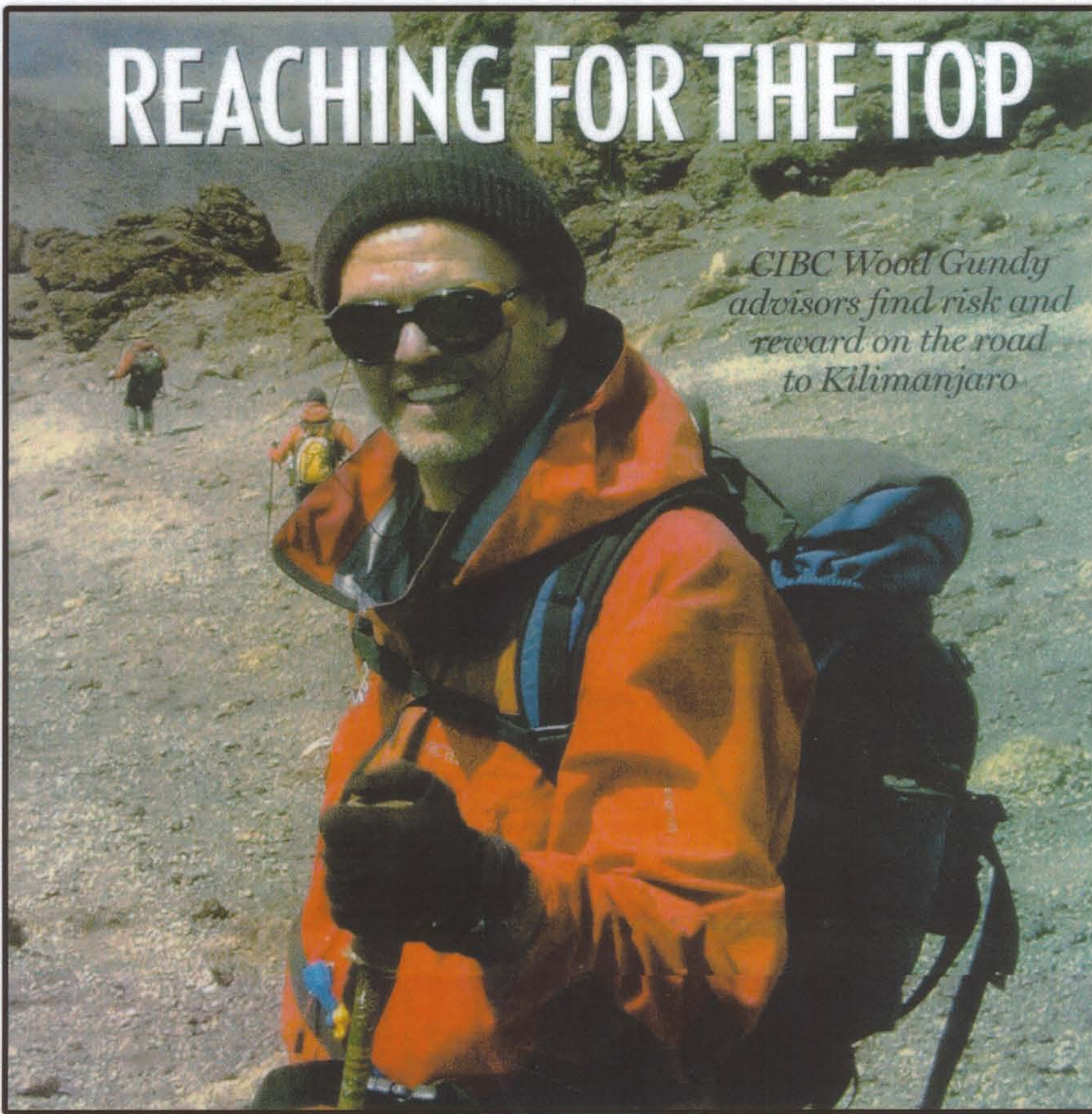
"I think that successful advisors have competitive personalities and they really go for a challenge," the 42-year-old says. "When you look at us, we're professional fundraisers for ourselves. [Though affiliated with CIBC Wood Gundy, advisors work on a self-employed basis.] When you look at the challenge it's a good fit." A challenge it will be.

On the day before the climb is set to start, the clouds shrouding Kilimanjaro suddenly part to reveal its fabled roof. The peak that inspired such literary giants as Ernest Hemingway looks down from a daunting height.

While breast cancer poses a clear and present danger, so do mountains — and Kili doesn't let the Climb for the Cure participants pass without paying their dues.

The climb is barely out of the gate when a freak accident almost ends the trip for the Loheads, the husband-and-wife advisor team from London, Ont.

Mr. Lohead's skull meets with a metal spike branching off from the roof frame of the truck the couple were riding in to the drop-off point.



REACHING FOR THE TOP

*CIBC Wood Gundy advisors find risk and reward on the road to Kilimanjaro*

Peter Lohead, a 47-year-old investment advisor from London, Ont., was lucky to be on the mountain, having sustained a head injury on the drive to the drop-off point.

The head wound gushes blood. Luckily Houman Mahallati, a Calgary radiologist, is on the trip with friend B.K. Milne. He practises some trail-side medicine, closing the gash with sutures rounded up from the first aid kits of climb members.

Amazingly, the 47-year-old Mr. Lohead is able to continue.

Along the way he jokes, "People said you've got to have holes in your head to climb this mountain, and they were right."

But, on the ascent, things got much more serious.

Somewhere between an altitude of 14,950 ft. and 15,925 ft., Tamara Kayfetz-Kingston, wife of advisor Tim Kingston, tumbles head over heels off the trail to the rocks below. Guides and porters drop their loads and rush from all directions to her aid. She's able to talk, but she has a gash on her forehead and can't hold herself up.

It's clear her climb is over. With husband Tim hovering anxiously nearby, Ms. Kayfetz-Kingston is strapped into a stretcher. It takes 22 porters three hours to carry her down to road access.

In a phone interview later from her home in Kingston, Ont., Ms. Kayfetz-Kingston recalls the moment when she fell.

"I don't know if I misstepped or I slipped or I got dizzy. I don't really remember. But I do remember falling, and it was pretty scary. I pretty much thought I was going to die, but luckily a big boulder stopped me and probably saved my life. I have a certain feeling of disappointment that it ended this way. However, I think I accomplished something amazing just getting as far as I did... I think I did a good thing. I'm alive. I'm pretty happy about that. I did see my life flash in front of my eyes there for a little while."

As the group carries on, the increased altitude begins to take its toll. People start complaining of headaches. There are cold symptoms, coughs and at least one bleeding nose. It also becomes harder to sleep



The pain and the pleasure: Tamara Kayfetz-Kingston, above, suffers a climb-ending fall partway up the mountain. Below, married climbers Warrick and Dorothy Squires smile for the camera at the Kilimanjaro summit.

and strangely, some of the climbers who do manage to catch a bit of shut eye report disturbing dreams. There's brisk sharing in over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol, sinus and cold medications, and Gravol.

Diamox starts taking its toll, too. It is a drug, recommended by tour company Tusker Trail, used by a majority of the Climb for the Cure members because it accelerates acclimatization.

In mid-climb, Mr. Barnes, the company-appointed "spiritual leader," decides to start taking Diamox.

"I didn't want to have any excuses for not getting to the top," says Mr. Barnes of the reason for his decision. His strategy turns out to be short-lived — he only takes two pills — when the Diamox makes him feel ill. "It was probably the thing that caused me to feel lousy," he says later from his Toronto office. Among Diamox's more serious side effects are diarrhea and stomach cramps.

Naturally, some nerves are rattled. "There was a point where I felt a little bit scared... To hear someone heaving [in the night], I had a major migraine..." Ms. Fowler says. "It hit home."

Yet, despite the general malaise, there is some good-natured competition to see who has the best oxygen saturation readings. They are taken twice daily by Tusker Trail guides to monitor how

climbers are coping with the change in altitude.

An average pre-climb reading, according to the Tusker guides, is 95% hemoglobin saturated with oxygen and 72 pulse. As the group ascends, oxygen levels begin to drop and pulse rates rise. But some are seemingly immune to the effects. At the start of day three, B.K. Milne is still in the pink with an oxygen level of 98% and a pulse of 68.

"He's a poster boy for good, clean living," someone quips.

Romance is also in what little air there is. Judy Collins, companion of fellow Calgary advisor Colin Campbell, proposes at the summit and he accepts.

"He was taking too long," Ms.

Collins says of her move.

Climbers also find time to talk about business, specifically compliance and the reputation problems that are plaguing the investment industry in general.

"Everybody is paranoid about how to protect yourself and the corporation against risk," says Joyce Logie, a Toronto advisor.

"There's always bad apples attracted to this business because it pays you well. You can also build a good business honestly," Ms. Logie says.

"For every Portus there is a lot of good things," Mr. Lohead says.

Thoughts of industry trouble are likely driven clean out of advisors' heads a day ahead of the summit when the climbers see their lives flash before their eyes.

The ascent from an altitude of 15,925 ft. to 18,300 ft. calls for group members to pull themselves straight up red rock stacked in maddeningly geometric patterns, and to crawl along crests of volcanic rock.

It's a gruelling and dangerous six-hour ordeal that has some people crying at the top. There is talk that participants should have been roped for that leg of the climb, or at least have had that option.

Dr. Mahallati will later recall that he backed out twice that day.

Amid the blood, sweat and tears, one of the climb's sweetest stories plays out quietly at the back of the pack.

James Blake is tackling Kilimanjaro for the second time. He participated in last year's inaugural Climb for the Cure but it ended prematurely for him when his oxygen levels dropped to 47% at an altitude of 14,950 ft. Tusker guides recommended he take some Diamox to try and correct the problem but he mistakenly took another drug.

The 37-year-old father of four is back for more punishment because "I had the screwup and my mother-in-law is a breast cancer survivor so I promised to bring her a rock back from Kilimanjaro." Once he's at Lava Tower Camp, the scene of last year's drama, Mr. Blake pronounces, "It's good."

"It all seems possible now."  
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