

TRAILBLAZING

Memorial University professor and outdoor enthusiast
T.A. Loeffler hopes to reach the top of Mount Everest in 2007

By Valerie Kent

Then suddenly there was no more. This was the top. No higher ground could be found. The whole world lay at our feet. As I took

the last steps to the summit. I raised my ice axe above my head in celebration and felt a wave of exultation and relief rise from deep within me. A moment I'd worked so hard for...a moment I'd dreamed about...Tears sprung to my eyes and the emotion threatened to spill over but I feared saltwater freezing on my cheeks so I transformed the emotional energy into a celebratory yelp and climbed to a safer spot to welcome the rope team members behind me to the summit. Day 26 on Denali - Summit Day.

MOUNT MCKINLEY - DENALI

That journal entry was written by Memorial University professor Dr. T.A. Loeffler after she reached the summit of North America's highest mountain, Mount McKinley (also called Denali) in June, 2005. Only half of those who attempt to climb this mountain actually reach the top, but Loeffler did it. And she's not stopping there. The professor in the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation is currently fundraising for her Everest climb in the spring of 2007. You read that right — she's working towards climbing Mount Everest. And part of that preparation is

reaching the top of Mount Elbrus in Russia, which is where she's heading at the end of August.



T.A. Loeffler photo

Sound amazing? Well, there's more. But first lets backtrack a little. Loeffler, who is originally from Edmonton, says she was lucky as an adolescent. She got involved with her local YWCA which had an outdoor centre and summer camp.

"As early as 12, I was being groomed for outdoor leadership and camp counseling and really found I would come into my own in the outdoors," she tells *The Herald*.