EDITORS' NOTE

Seek Challenge

Those who read *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine* are usually of the adventurous sort. We pride ourselves on seeking new and challenging activities in the outdoor environment. In this issue, the Brief Report "Personality Characteristics in a Population of Mountain Climbers" examines whether there are particular personality characteristics among the cohort of climbers and mountaineers. The report, not surprisingly, shows that mountaineers score higher than the normal population on the "Novelty Seeking" scale. This seems accurate. The report also finds mountaineers low on the "Harm Avoidance" scale. This does not seem entirely accurate, however. The general public may view rock climbers and mountaineers as a reckless bunch that cares nothing about health and safety. However, some of the most lauded and respected climbers explicitly take *all possible precautions* to avoid harm and leave little to chance. As Ed Viesturs and other mountaineers have said, "It's a round trip. Getting to the summit is optional, getting down is mandatory." Many successful summit attempts on the world's highest peaks are due to the diligence of guides and climbers towards safety and self-preservation.

The safety concerns of mountain guides and wilderness medical providers are further illustrated in the article, "From Matterhorn to Mt Everest: Empowering Rescuers and Improving Medical Care in Nepal." Brodmann Maeder and colleagues describe how an international team of guides, pilots, and medical providers is overcoming challenges and working to create a system of mountain rescue and medical care in the Khumbu valley of Nepal.

When things go wrong, most experienced, self-reliant wilderness adventurers attempt to avoid rescue at all costs. According to National Park Service data, casual hikers are rescued more often than climbers and mountaineers. Sometimes, however, search and rescue (SAR) is inevitable for even the most proficient. This issue contains research in search theory, "Use of the Visual Range of Detection to Estimate Effective Sweep Width for Land Search and Rescue based upon Ten Detection Experiments in North America." This article includes highly technical SAR terminology and statistics, so a primer entitled "Wilderness Search Strategy and Tactics" will educate readers on the technical aspects of search theory. *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine* has only rarely published research in search theory, because research is not as abundant in this area. We hope this will stimulate a renewed interest in SAR theory and practice, generating further research.

We must always remember to seek new and novel experiences, while being safe and self-reliant at the same time. Most importantly, remember the wise words of Alex Lowe who said that "The best climber in the world is the one who's having the most fun."

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