



Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Film: High Ambitions

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Photo by Curt Dowdy: On the ice wall.

BeLegato Productions, a film company based in Los Gatos, Calif., announces that its new feature length documentary High Ambitions in the Himalaya will screen at the upcoming Sedona International Film Festival. The presentation includes appearances by adventure filmmaker Curt Dowdy.

High Ambitions in the Himalaya follows a team of mountaineers attempting to climb one of the world's highest mountains. One featured climber is John Taske, a survivor of the fatal 1996 Mount Everest tragedy documented in the best-selling book "Into Thin Air." In 1996, Taske turned back 200 meters from the Mount Everest summit, sacrificing his goal but saving his own life in the onset of a deadly hurricane-force storm. In the High Ambitions in the Himalaya story, Taske, at the age of 61, still yearns to summit one of the so-called 8,000-meter peaks, one of 14 prized mountains above 26,000 feet, all located in the Himalayan Range.

Taske and his new teammates embark upon a six-week expedition to climb a mountain named Cho Oyu, a neighbor of Mount Everest on the Nepal/Tibet border. At 27,000 feet, Cho Oyu is the sixth highest mountain in the world. Each climber candidly shares his unfolding experience and reflects upon oxygen deprivation, extreme cold, and brushes with death among other teams. Facing hardships that test not only endurance but also judgment and character, the team is reminded that lessons from the journey are more important than the goal.

The 2006 Sedona International Film Festival & Workshop runs Feb 23-26. The movie High Ambitions in the Himalaya and its director Curt Dowdy will appear twice during the festival. More information can be found at www.highambitions.net.

High Ambitions in the Himalaya screenings, followed by Q&A with adventure filmmaker Curt Dowdy:

First screening, 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23

Second screening, 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25

Both events held at Harkins Theatres Sedona 6, 2081 W. Arizona 89A, in Sedona.

Advance ticket purchase is recommended. Tickets are available at the festival box office, 45 Sunset Drive, Sedona, or

purchase by phone at 282-1177. For other festival information, visit www.sedonafilmfestival.com.

"It's fitting that this film should be seen in Sedona," Dowdy said. "We've enjoyed enthusiastic audiences in communities where quality of life is a priority and where people have an appreciation for the beauty and transformative power of nature. That spirit underlies this film, and it motivated us to take more of an introspective look at extreme mountaineering rather than just sensationalizing the sport."

Dowdy discovered his own personal transformation propelled by the experience on Cho Oyu.

"I used to be a senior-level manager in the Silicon Valley corporate world," he said. "Attempting to climb this mountain and making a film about it represented a heart-felt dream that my corporate colleagues thought was pretty irrational, especially when taking that much time off would jeopardize my position in a declining economy. I went through with it anyway and proved to myself that I was much happier following the direction of my heart rather than my rational mind. I quit my corporate job, and now I'm living out a life-long dream to make inspirational films."

High Ambitions in the Himalaya won an Audience Award in its category at the Santa Cruz, California InternationalCine Festival.

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