

THE TIMEKEEPER



COLIN HALEY

Kellogg on Cerro Torre with Colin Haley in 2013.

CHAD KELLOGG WAS ONE OF ALPINISM'S MOST ACTIVE PRACTITIONERS, BEATING CANCER AND TACKLING HIS OWN AMBITIONS ON HIS QUEST TO BECOME THE FITTEST AND FASTEST CLIMBER IN THE WORLD

> **BY ANDY ANDERSON**

10:00 / 11:00 > 12:00 / 01:00 / 02:00 03:00 > 04:00



RACHEL SPITZER

Kellogg about midway up the *Northeast Buttress* of Mount Slesse (V 5.9), one of the *50 Classic Climbs*, and first done by Fred Beckey, Eric Bjornstad and Steve Marts, in 1963.

THE TINY ROOM IN EL CHALTÉN, ARGENTINA

was dark when Chad Kellogg snuck in at 3 a.m., but his climbing partner Jens Holsten felt an unsettled energy reverberate through the space. The two were packed and ready to hike into the mountains in the morning, and for a guy like Kellogg, with a near religious devotion to training, maintenance and rest, the late arrival was out of character.

Their trip so far had been marked by unrelenting storms and poor conditions—a grim season even by Patagonian standards. Marginal windows had allowed them attempts at *Exocet* on Cerro Standhardt and the *Supercanaleta* on Fitz Roy, but they had been beaten back by storms. With only a few weeks remaining in the trip and the climbing season, the forecast showed four days of stable high pressure with no wind—the best weather in three months.

The plan was to climb the *Afanasseif* on Fitz Roy. At nearly 5,000 feet, it was one of the longest climbs in the range, but with much easy scrambling and moderate, low-angle climbing, it should fall quickly to the experienced alpinists. And maybe, just maybe, the weather would hold long enough for them to regroup and climb a route on the Torre massif.

Kellogg and Holsten had big plans for the future, and had recently been awarded a grant for Labuche Kang III in Tibet and Lunang Ri in Nepal. They had attempted a number of serious climbs in their two years as regular partners, but the only successes they had shared were a major traverse and a climb of Dragontail Peak, both back home in the Cascades. Their friendship and ambition were strong, but their partnership needed validation, and they both felt the pinch.

“Noticed you came in pretty late,” Holsten said when they both woke. Kellogg confessed that he had spent much of the previous night in a cramped phone booth, talking with his girlfriend, Mandy.

For years Kellogg’s life had been a continuous and often chaotic series of major alpine climbing expeditions, often financially jerry-rigged with just enough work as a contractor in Seattle to fund the next plane ticket. But a part of him had always yearned for a more traditional existence—to have a wife, kids, a home base—and that feeling sometimes conflicted with his strong desire to be one of the world’s alpine elite. After Fitz Roy, he was going to fly back and meet Mandy’s family in Lincoln, Nebraska, before the couple returned home and got married. He had earlier promised that he would stay put in Seattle for a few months after Patagonia, but an opportunity had come up,

and he had rough plans to leave for Nepal in March, just a few weeks after coming home from Patagonia.

He and Jens ran a few final errands and Kellogg e-mailed his friend Dan back in Seattle to arrange a flower delivery to Mandy. He would be in the mountains on Valentine’s Day.

He tucked a pinch of tobacco under his lower lip, and the two shouldered their packs for the long walk into Niponino base camp. The gnarled beech trees still swayed in the last winds of the dissipating storm, and they talked about Kellogg’s dilemma.

“There’s just not enough time, Jens,” Kellogg said.

As they crossed the glacier into the Torre Valley, where toothy granite spires reared up on both sides, Kellogg grew quiet and focused on the goal at hand, as he had done so many times before. Life back home would have to wait—the clock was ticking.

Chad LEWIS KELLOGG was born in 1971 in Omak, Washington, a short drive from his parents’ home in the Methow Valley. Ric and Peggy Kellogg were pastors at an Assembly of God church and began taking their new son into the nearby North Cascades when he was only a few months old. In 1973, they were called away as missionaries, and the young family moved to Kisumu, Kenya, a small port city on the shore of Lake Victoria. The family’s home was a stone’s throw from the city limits, beyond which lay untitled

AFTER YEARS OF LIVING BY HUNDREDTHS OF A SECOND, KELLOGG FOUND IN CLIMBING THE FREEDOM TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD ON HIS OWN TERMS.



tribal lands and thousands of Kenyans living in mud huts. Kellogg’s first climb was up the large blue gum eucalyptus in the backyard.

Life in Kisumu was rife with objective hazard. Hawks and small leopard-like genet cats crept into the yard in pursuit of the family chickens. Down by the lakeshore, hippos and crocodiles lurked. Intense dry lightning storms occasionally crackled over the parched landscape to the east. The Kelloggs once found a spitting cobra in Chad’s playhouse, and later a green mamba curled up under his crib.

By the time the family moved back to Washington in 1980, Kellogg had a new younger brother, Shawn, and a quite different world-view than the kids in his grade-school classroom. He came home frustrated that no one believed his wild stories about life in Kenya. He felt like an outsider, stunned by how different life was in the States.

The forests surrounding the family’s home in Brier, covered in mossy cedar stumps and prehistoric ferns, became Chad’s new milieu. He built dirt jumps for his bike, which he paid for by selling candy bars door-to-door. He chased after his Siberian husky, Thunder, who was constantly running away.

COLIN HALEY

“He might have gotten some inspiration from the dog,” says Ric. “Not to be too confined.”

He was outgoing and loved to play with other kids, and was driven and competitive in both sports and the classroom.

“If he couldn’t be the top achiever, he wanted to do something else,” says Peggy.

The Kelloggs spent time hiking and camping in the Cascades, and also began skiing. For the middle-class family, the passion required some sacrifices.

“Why do we always drive beater cars?” the boys asked. “Why can’t we get a nice one?”

“Do you want to ski?” was Ric’s standard reply.

When Chad was in high school, a climber and carpenter named Dan Waters rented an unfinished basement room in the family’s house. Pinching pennies to save for his next climbing trip, Waters would finish a contracting job and hit the road, retreating back to Seattle to work when the money ran out. Chad idolized Waters—he peppered him with questions, and Waters took him bouldering on the University of Washington climbing-rock structure and on his first outdoor climbs.

Near the end of his senior year at North Seattle Christian School in 1988, Chad

became captivated by a luge race on TV. An ad ran across the screen, calling those interested to try out for a Junior Olympic training camp, a kind of feeder program to cultivate future Olympians. Kellogg was incredibly athletic and had dabbled in organized sports—he’d lettered in golf and played basketball, soccer and baseball—but his independent nature clashed with a traditional team approach. In the luge, he saw a sport that provided the kind of adrenaline and introspection he thrived on, and required the kind of focus and determination he knew he possessed.

He flew to Los Angeles, and after a series of tryouts on a wheeled luge course, he was selected for the program. After his first quarter at UW that fall, he put school on hold and moved to Lake Placid, New York, to train full time.

Kellogg trained with an ex-pat Russian coach and added 45 pounds of muscle to his 5-foot, 9-inch frame. At night, he’d spend hour after hour obsessing over his sled, meticulously sanding its steel runners with progressively finer-grain sandpaper. Relatives sent him money, but funding for the program was tight and Chad was constantly fundraising. He often hitchhiked back to

Washington for visits to save money.

In December of 1991, he was a forerunner for the 1992 Olympic trials, but fell short of the time cut-off for making the team. For the next two years, he traveled on the Junior World Cup circuit, becoming one of the fastest starters on the national team. The night before the trials for the 1994 Olympics, his then girlfriend dumped him. The next day, he missed the cut-off by fractions of a second.

“I could picture myself on the award stand accepting the gold medal,” Kellogg later told the Tacoma *News Tribune*, which in 2004 ran a profile of him as a climber. “When I didn’t make it, I thought I had wasted seven years of my life.”

The team invited him to stay in Lake Placid and train for the 1998 Olympics, but Kellogg was burned out.

“He felt like he hadn’t gotten the breaks that he wanted to get, that he needed to get,” Ric says.

With dwindling funds and his next shot nearly four years away, he left his sled in a Lake Placid storage unit and hitchhiked back to Washington for good.

Back IN SEATTLE, the 23-year-old Kellogg searched for direction without the rigid structure his training for the luge had provided. Now that he was living near the Cascades, climbing rapidly began to fill the void left by his unrealized Olympic dreams. He moved into a house with some snowboarding friends, grew his hair out and got a job at the REI in Seattle’s Capitol Hill area.

“He was probably raising and selling pot,” says Ric. “Our good kitchen scale disappeared about that time.”

After years of living by hundredths of a second, Kellogg found in climbing the freedom to experience the world on his own terms. He dedicated summers to building his alpine resume on remote mountains in the North Cascades, and shoulder seasons to living in a cave behind Camp 4 and ticking off walls in Yosemite. In the winter, he’d return to Washington to snowboard.

During a trip to Joshua Tree in 1996, Kellogg, then 25, ran into Mike Gauthier, an old friend from Washington who was working for the Park Service on Mount Rainier. Gauthier had been tasked with recruiting fresh talent for the climbing-ranger team on the mountain, and encouraged Kellogg, who had developed a reputation around the Pacific Northwest as a strong all-around climber and mountaineer, to apply.

Kellogg got the job and that summer joined

DESCENDING FROM AN ATTEMPT ON THE NORTHEAST RIDGE OF MOUNT WAKE IN THE RUTH GORGE, LARA KELLOGG RAPPELLED OFF THE END OF THE ROPE.

Gauthier, David Gottlieb, Mark Westman and Joe Puryear in what would eventually become something of an alpine dream team. Though all of them were talented climbers, Kellogg's exceptional cardio fitness and desire to raise the standard affected the group.

"When the tide came in with Chad, all the boats in the harbor rose," Gauthier says.

In his first summer as a ranger, Kellogg summited Rainier 33 times. The following year, he broke the speed record, climbing from Paradise to the summit and back in 5 hours 6 minutes. He even brought his snowboard to the job, and other rangers followed suit, drastically improving their rescue response times.

While many of the older guides and locals scoffed at the cocky young hotshot with something to prove, Gauthier saw an introspective and detail-oriented athlete who used the mountain as a measuring stick for his personal challenges. Everything about climbing became quantified in calories consumed, ounces carried, vertical feet climbed, seconds elapsed.

"It was part of his aesthetic almost, to see the mountain as this series of number games," Gauthier says. "I think that was a way for him to control his world and make sense of it."

As a technical climber Kellogg struggled, but when it came to endurance and pacing in the big mountains, he was a machine.

"You might be ahead of him when you left the car," says Roger Strong, a Washington climber and sales rep. "But by the end of the day you'd be like, 'Can you carry me?'"

In the spring of 1999, Kellogg got a call from Lara Biteniaks, a climber he had met years before while working at REI. She was headed to Yosemite to climb El Cap with a friend, and their third partner couldn't make it. Kellogg, who had already climbed a handful of serious routes on the Captain, was a natural ringier.

Biteniaks was a former punk-rock bike messenger turned outdoor athlete who seemed

to share Kellogg's intensity and drive. But where Kellogg could come off as being quiet and reserved, Lara was bright-natured and outgoing, a social hub. She was competitive and had strong opinions, but she had countless friends who loved and respected her. At the time, she also had a boyfriend.

On El Cap, sitting with Kellogg on the portledge on *Tangerine Trip*, with their friend Kai Hirvonen dangling in a hammock below, Lara got a glimpse beyond the aloof stoner she had seen around Seattle. He was smart and funny, his animated eyebrows furrowing around his stormy blue eyes.

When they descended the East Ledges five days later, Kellogg's smoldering interest had been ignited. Lara had often climbed with other male partners, but she and her boyfriend had been drifting apart, and she mentioned that she was looking for a partner to climb in Alaska.

A month later, the two climbed the West Ridge of Mount Hunter. Eager to seal the deal with one of the most sought-after climbing women in Seattle, Kellogg read Pablo Neruda poems to her during stormy days in the tent.

"They came back, and we heard from both of them that it worked," says Kellogg's close friend Ammi Borenstein, a product designer for Outdoor Research.

Within a year, Kellogg and Biteniaks were married.

They moved into Lara's West Seattle house, and with the help of Lara's father, Robert Biteniaks, remodeled the entire home. Kellogg finished school, graduating from the University of Washington with honors and a degree in International Economics. He even landed a desk job, testing software for Expeditors International, a global logistics company.

"Chad was very driven," Gauthier says, "but Lara pushed him in a lot of ways to improve and change his life, and become more than just a guy who had lived out of a van at Crystal Mountain or a cave in Yosemite or a trailer camp on Mount Rainier."

Biteniaks settled into a position working as a research scientist, doing statistical analysis for UW's Pacific Wildland Fire Sciences Laboratory. The pair's tight-knit cadre of climbing friends was hitting its stride in then-booming Seattle. Life was stable and the Kelloggs, both highly motivated and passionate about the mountains, were the quintessential climbing couple.

Despite the relative security that his new life afforded, the confinement of an office cubicle wore on Kellogg. When Lara came home one day mentioning a speed-climbing competition in Kazakhstan, Kellogg quit his job, signed up for the competition, and joined

his father-in-law, Robert, full-time at his construction business, where he could have an intermittent, flexible schedule.

Early in the summer of 2003, Chad and Lara went to Denali to train for his upcoming event in Kazakhstan. Four days after they summited and descended via the Upper West Rib, Kellogg went from Kahiltna Base Camp to the summit and back via the West Buttress in 23 hours 55 minutes, the first time the mountain had been climbed round-trip in a day.

After three days of rest in Talkeetna, he returned with clients and summited Denali a third time. Feeling fit and flush with cash from guiding, he boarded a plane for Asia just a few weeks later.

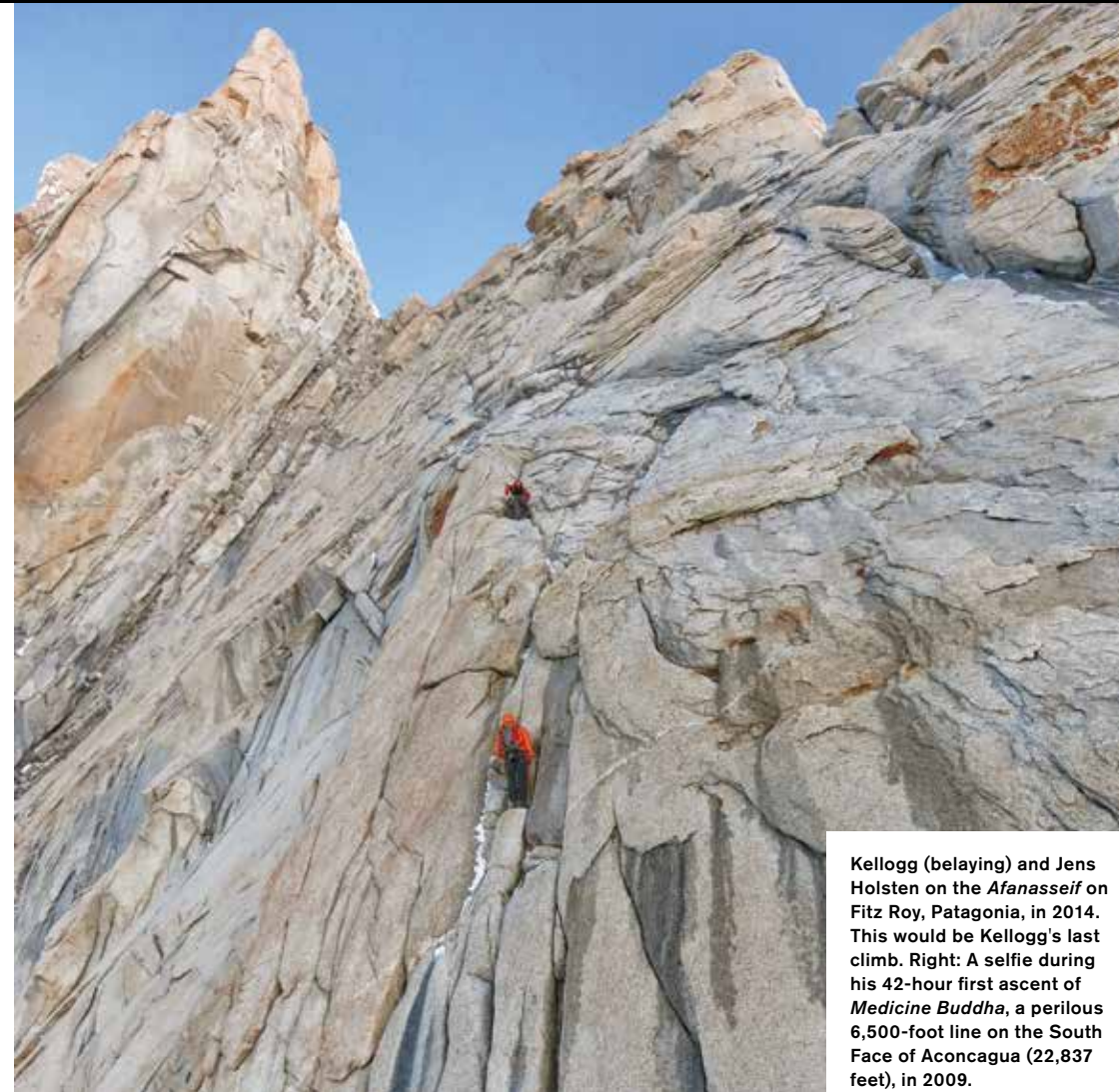
The Festival Khan Tengri, a race up the 23,100-foot Khan Tengri in the Tien Shan Range, would take Kellogg higher than he had ever been, but the chance to stand on the podium previously occupied by alpine luminaries like Alex Lowe and Denis Urubko was irresistible. In his mind, it was a chance to post a time on the global scoreboard, to be a made guy in alpinism's upper crust.

When he arrived in base camp in late July, alone and with no translator, the mood was tense. Kellogg tried to shake off the hostile, incomprehensible snickers he received from the predominantly Russian and Central Asian climbers. Who was this American?

But on August 1, as family and friends watched back home via a primitive satellite feed, Kellogg went from base camp at 13,400 feet, to the route's high point and back in a winning 6 hours 11 minutes. Kellogg had finally gotten his gold medal, but with an asterisk—due to bad weather in the days prior to the event, the race's high point had only been fixed to 21,500 feet, 1,600 feet short of the peak's true summit.

Three days later, when the festivities were in full swing and medals were being handed out, Kellogg was still in the mountains, having soloed back up the route to the true summit.

What had started as guide-shack bragging rights began to coalesce into a linear series of accomplishments. Kellogg knew he'd never be a 5.14 rock star, but he'd confirmed that he was capable of moving fast, carrying big loads and enduring long pushes. In the summer of 2004, he climbed to just shy of the summit of the world's 12th-highest mountain, Broad Peak (26,414 feet), and to Camp II on K2's Abruzzi Ridge. Soon after returning to Seattle, he bested his speed record on Rainier, climbing and descending in 4 hours 59 minutes, sporting little more than a pair of track spikes and some unwrapped energy bars taped to his arms. He climbed new routes on



Kellogg (belaying) and Jens Holsten on the *Afanasseif* on Fitz Roy, Patagonia, in 2014. This would be Kellogg's last climb. Right: A selfie during his 42-hour first ascent of *Medicine Buddha*, a perilous 6,500-foot line on the South Face of Aconcagua (22,837 feet), in 2009.



route on Siguniang. Lounging in camp, Kellogg spotted their expedition liaison, Mr. Ma, riding a horse up the hill toward camp. The climbers greeted him with smiles and jokes. But Mr. Ma's face was solemn as he handed Kellogg a note.

There's been an accident. Call home.

Down in Rilong, the nearest town, Kellogg frantically searched for answers, finally reaching his friend Mark Westman.

Descending from an attempt on the Northeast Ridge of Mount Wake in the Ruth Gorge, Lara was looking for an anchor when she rappelled off the end of the rope and fell nearly 1,000 feet. It had been a week since she had died, at age 38. Kellogg was one of the last people to find out.

"From that day it was a different Chad," says Strong. "He didn't smile much for a long time."

Kellogg, Puryear and Janousek abandoned the mountain, though almost immediately all three made plans to return to Siguniang five months later, in September.

"However, the anger and sadness bottled up inside me were like acid eating at my organs," Kellogg wrote in the *American Alpine Journal*.

Then a few months after Lara's death, Kellogg spent an uncomfortable night on the toilet, wondering about the blood in his stool. The bleeding had been happening since his trip to China that spring, though only Puryear and Janousek knew about it. He hated going to the doctor, but something told him not to blow it off this time.

His alarm clock went off early the next morning, to meet a friend for a day trip in the Cascades. On their way out of town, Kellogg stopped by the ER, and the doctors ran some tests before referring him to a specialist.

Two weeks later he had a diagnosis—colon cancer, stage two. Fast-tracking him into surgery, the doctors removed nine inches

20,190-foot Luktse in Tibet, Kichatna Spire in Alaska and two virgin peaks in China.

In early 2007, the Kelloggs made plans to return to the Alaska Range in the spring. Chad and Joe Puryear had also applied, for the same spring, for the McNeill-Nott Award to climb Mount Siguniang (20,510 feet), a massive peak in China that they had attempted in 2005.

Kellogg's aspirations for bigger and bigger challenges, combined with his long stints away from home while Lara continued to work a 9-to-5 job, began to wear on their relationship.

"Sometimes I wonder if his life isn't him compensating for not getting that gold medal," Lara said in the 2004 profile of Kellogg in the Tacoma *Nexus Tribune*.

"There was a lot of pressure on Chad to produce achievement in the mountains, and Lara pushed herself really hard," says Gauthier. "So they were just pushing, pushing, pushing. And I think they had slightly different goals."

"He was one of the most competitive people I've ever known, and he married Lara, who also was one of the most competitive people



With Rachel Spitzer on the summit of Mount Slesse.



Kellogg attempted to set the speed record on Mount Everest in 2010, 2011 and 2013, soloed a new route on the South Face of Aconcagua (upper right), and was the first to break five hours round trip on Mount Rainier (lower right).



of his colon. If the cancer had gotten much further, they said, Kellogg would be wearing a colostomy bag for the rest of his life.

Doctors predicted a full recovery, but his trip to Siguniang, only five weeks away, was out.

In the spring of 2008, nearly a year after Lara's death, Kellogg was still a wreck. Physically, he had approached cancer as if it were a mountain, calculating and pacing his recovery. To save money for future trips, he had moved from their West Seattle home into the small mother-in-law apartment behind the rental property he owned in Columbia City. He spent time in Hawaii remodeling a condo, surfing and getting back in shape. He had even begun dating someone.

But Lara's death and his cancer diagnosis had piled on top of issues that had been brewing under the surface for years—resentment about his hardcore Christian upbringing, dissatisfaction with not making it to the Olympics, his brother's recurring drug problem, and an Internet troll who challenged any and all of Kellogg's speed records.

More often than not, he'd brood and become despondent, sedating his pain with a now near-constant regimen of high-grade weed. His unprocessed emotions made him prone to feelings of isolation and sudden outbursts of anger and jealousy.

Puryear had moved in with Kellogg and his new girlfriend, Deb Hinchey, for several weeks in the fall of 2007 to help manage construction projects while Kellogg recovered. But when Puryear and Janousek had gone through with the trip to China in September, Kellogg was furious. He lashed out at the two, accusing Puryear of stealing his client. Their relationship soured.

Hinchey had dabbled in Buddhism, and she convinced Kellogg to sign up for a weekend

meditation retreat with the BodhiHeart Dharma Center, a Seattle Buddhist education center. The theme of the retreat was Dealing with Difficult Emotions, and when they arrived, the first session was on anger. Kellogg took it as a sign he was meant to be there.

"He sat in the very front row with a beautiful meditation posture which seemed to come to him naturally," says Tenzin Jesse, one of the founders of BodhiHeart. "You see a lot of people come to dharma class and kind of tourist their way through it, but he really practiced it. From the beginning, he was going to make a transformation."

Though long disenchanted with his religious roots, Kellogg saw uncanny connections between his own life and the teachings of Buddhism.

"It's something that you train in, and he could relate to that," Jesse says. "Just like you can train your mind and your body as a climber, you can train your altruism and your compassion and your patience and your generosity."

Kellogg began attending classes once a week, though by now he had resumed a hectic schedule of work and training. He never missed a session. Soon he began going twice a week. "You could see him applying the teaching to his experience," Jesse says. "His whole experience with mortality—he understood the impermanence of things, the inevitability of death, but in a context."

Kellogg quit drinking and smoking pot, vices that had been companions for years. He gave energy to important relationships and patched those marred by his anger.

In September of 2008, he returned to Siguniang, this time with his fellow Seattle alpinist Dylan Johnson, who had been a good friend of Lara's and had become a close climbing partner for Kellogg.

Over nine days, 72 pitches, and more than

9,000 feet of climbing, Kellogg and Johnson clawed their way up a 2,000-foot big wall, across a mile of knife-edge ridge and up high-altitude snow and ice to the summit.

"There were so many reasons we should have bailed way earlier, but he was so stoically motivated to finish the route," Johnson wrote on a memorial page for Kellogg. "He literally grabbed the rack from me, put his head down into the storm and charged upward."

Though a long and harrowing descent awaited, the first ascent of the Southwest Ridge, the climb that had eluded him through his most troubling times, was complete. As he and Johnson released Lara's ashes on top of the mountain, Kellogg felt a sense of closure and peace he hadn't known in years.

"I was given a second chance at life," he said in a 2009 episode of the *Dirtbag Diaries* podcast. "It was a quest."

After Siguniang, the gaps between expeditions became smaller. On the rare occasions when Kellogg was in Seattle, it wasn't unusual for him to work 16-hour days to pay for the next trip. Any time left over he devoted to training, earning him the nickname Suffer Machine. He'd often wake at 4:30 in the morning to do a trail run on Tiger Mountain or get a session at the climbing gym before strapping on his tool belt for the day. Unexpected down time meant grueling weight circuits or interval laps up the 388 steps of Seattle's Howe Street Stairs. In 2009 on Mount Rainier, he traversed up and over the mountain twice in under 24 hours. Much to the chagrin of his next girlfriend, he began sleeping in an altitude chamber. "You better not fart in here," she said.

When that relationship ended, Kellogg's existence became even more monastic. He

rented out his place and moved into the back of his Toyota truck, sometimes staying at the Buddhist Dharma Center or on his old friend Ammi Borenstein's couch, or wedging in a few hours of sleep in the parking lot of the Seattle Bouldering Project between training and work.

The deaths continued—grandparents, Joe Puryear in a cornice collapse in Tibet in 2010, Chad's brother Shawn to heart failure in 2011, his climbing partner Bjorn-Eivind Artun in a climbing accident in 2012. But now Kellogg had the emotional skills to handle the losses.

"Suffering, like pain and loss, is inevitable, is part of the human condition," says Tenzin Jesse. "But if you practice a view of yourself in the world that's in sync with the nature of reality, then you don't see all these external things as the cause of your suffering and your happiness. And when you get a handle on suffering and happiness as internally caused, then you can create the causes for happiness and eliminate the causes for suffering. And he achieved that."

Technical routes on unclimbed mountains continued to drive Kellogg, but speed climbing remained his measure of fitness, the way he tested himself for future projects. In 2008, he began making plans and arranging finances to attempt one of his lifetime goals—to break the speed record (using no supplemental oxygen) on Mount Everest. Dan Nordstrom, the CEO of Outdoor Research, agreed to put up \$15,000, and Kellogg began a frenzy of work and fundraising to make up the shortfall.

But just a few months before he was set to leave for Nepal, he was caught in a whiteout during a solo ski lap down Rainier. Lost in the snow, he skied off an ice cliff, shattering his right arm. He struggled back to his truck, but the intense snowstorm forced him to spend a

miserable night in the Paradise parking lot, drifting in and out of consciousness while waiting for the snowplows. When help arrived in the morning, he was evacuated to Seattle's Harborview Medical Center. Everest would have to wait a year, and now he was even deeper in debt—his insurance didn't cover the \$20,000 Life Flight bill.

By December 2009, Kellogg was healed and fit, and headed south to Argentina. In a 42-hour solo push up the notorious South Face of Aconcagua, Kellogg made the first ascent of *Medicine Buddha*, a weaving, 6,500-foot line up a complex patchwork of hanging seracs. Several times during his ascent, avalanches swept the face. Though he acknowledged its committing and dangerous nature, Kellogg defended the route, saying he had meticulously planned his path.

"Timing is everything," he wrote in the *American Alpine Journal*.

Buddhism had provided Kellogg an altered

"THERE'S SO MUCH YOU CAN'T CONTROL," KELLOGG SAID IN A 2004 NEWSPAPER ARTICLE. "I IMAGINE I'LL PROBABLY GO WHEN A BOULDER FALLS ON ME OR I FALL IN A CREVASSE."

perspective on death, and although some grumbled that he had become reckless, those who knew him felt they understood his nuanced motivations.

"He wanted life, and he wanted to live that life to the fullest, without wasting a minute on the fear of death," his friend Dan Aylward says. "I always felt very safe climbing with Chad—probably more than anyone I've climbed with."

Kellogg knew that he wasn't immune to objective hazard. "There's so much you can't control," he said in the 2004 newspaper article. "I imagine I'll probably go when a boulder falls on me or I fall in a crevasse."

Over the next four years, Kellogg made three attempts to best the French climber Marc Batard's 1990 speed record on Everest. In 2010, thinking that his body would burn muscle at such high altitude, he arrived in Nepal 25 pounds overweight. But his body struggled to supply the extra burden with oxygen and, unable to afford Sherpa support, he couldn't recover from the crushing effort of establishing and stocking his high camps.

He returned home to find the housing market was struggling, and a crooked bookkeeper had put his finances into even more of a tailspin. Sponsors continued to front him cash for his attempts, but he went more and more deeply into debt, trying to pull off the trips.

"I might lose my house on this expedition," he told *Outside* of his upcoming 2012 Everest attempt.

A much leaner Kellogg arrived at base camp that year, but crowds, nutritional snafus and exhaustion put him off pace, and he turned around 200 meters below the summit.

In 2013, he was on track to break the record, but was forced to turn around, this time by high winds on the summit ridge at 27,225 feet.

In three expeditions, he had spent nearly a year on the mountain and made 70 trips through the dangerous Khumbu Icefall. He doubted whether he could fund another round, and the crowds and commercialism had worn on his psyche. But he knew better than to think of it as time wasted.

"I am proud of my effort and the ability to return from this expedition healthy and happy. There will be other climbs and trips to be made because I made the right decisions," he wrote on the Outdoor Research blog. "I learned and progressed as an athlete and as a human being. After all, life is about living for each moment."

RACHEL SPITZER

CHAD KELLOGG (UPPER RIGHT)

AT A TIME WHEN EVEREST WAS WRITTEN OFF AS A LOGJAM OF WEALTHY TOURISTS, KELLOGG STILL SAW IT AS A STAGE FOR THE CULMINATION OF HIS CAREER.

Like Kellogg, Jens Holsten grew up in Seattle, but it wasn't until early 2012 that a friend introduced them on the streets of El Chaltén, Argentina, the little mountain town at the base of the Fitz Roy Massif in Patagonia. A climbable spell had materialized for the next day, and they made plans to attempt Fitz Roy together. Though they were rained off the mountain that day, it became clear on the approach that their meeting was fortuitous—they shared a similar lifestyle and vision for climbing—they even had the same birthday.

"It was super obvious from the first climb that we did, that yeah, we're on the same page," Holsten says. "A lot of friends got married, had a kid or whatever. Chad and I thought, this is it, climbing is the priority."

Their connection transcended climbing, however, and in Holsten, Kellogg saw a piece of his old self—a troubled soul who could use the guidance of someone who had overcome his demons. Though Holsten was the stronger climber, Kellogg became somewhat of a spiritual mentor.

"I was kind of on the verge of making some breakthroughs in my life when we met," says Holsten, "and he was really fostering that."

They didn't reconnect to climb until a year later, when they attempted the infamous Southeast Ridge of Cerro Torre. Back home in July 2013, they climbed the Complete Pickets Traverse, a seven-day, 10-mile ridge traverse across one of the most remote sections of the North Cascades.

"We never did a climb together that wasn't serious," says Holsten. "We were all in."

In the fall, Kellogg, Holsten and David Gottlieb received the Mugs Stump Award, a grant that would allow them to attempt two unclimbed peaks the following year—Labuche Kang, where Gottlieb had been climbing with Puryear when he died, and

Lunang Ri, which Gottlieb and Kellogg had attempted in 2012.

But one project stood above all others in Kellogg's mind.

"For Chad, it was always building to something, always trying to get to the ultimate," Holsten says.

In a time when most alpinists have written off Everest as an overcrowded logjam of wealthy tourists buying their way to the summit, Kellogg still saw it as a stage for the culmination of his career in the mountains. In many ways, his previous three speed attempts were prerequisites—opportunities to experiment, learn about his body at altitude, and refine systems for something he felt was much more significant than a hot lap up the standard route.

Named by George Mallory, who reportedly quipped that it could be climbed only in the imagination, Everest's Fantasy Ridge is the last unclimbed spur on the mountain. A double-corniced fin that soars from the Kangshung Glacier to meet the notorious Three Pinnacles of the Northeast Ridge at 7,800 meters, the Fantasy Ridge has been attempted several times by large siege-style expeditions. Kellogg's dream was futuristic—to climb a dangerous, committing and technical new route to the highest point on Earth, in alpine style and without oxygen.

He propositioned a number of high-profile alpinists, including Ueli Steck, to no avail. But in late 2013, he contacted Kyle Dempster, a talented alpinist from Utah. Dempster was skeptical but intrigued by Kellogg's fanciful proposal, and the two decided to see how they'd climb together. They began hashing out plans to head to Nepal in April 2014, to try the East Ridge of Annapurna III.

Forty had come and gone. Kellogg, now 42, was in the best shape of his life but knew he couldn't chase big routes forever, and his unfulfilled desire for a stable home life was starting to gain traction. He and his girlfriend, Mandy Kraus, had only been together a short time, but things were moving quickly. They talked about building a small house in the Methow Valley of Washington, spending more time exploring the Cascades, starting a family.

On February 14, 2014, the sky over the summit of Fitz Roy shone a flawless azure blue. Beyond the arrow-like peaks of the massif, the pure white of the Patagonian Ice Cap stretched beyond to the fjords of the Pacific. The watery expanse of Lago Viedma and the arid Patagonian pampas faded into

the hazy horizon to the east.

The air was still, and the sun's warmth put a temporary end to uncertainty. Conditions on the *Afanaseif* had been far from ideal—ice filled many of the cracks, and feathery rime stuck to the rock like spackled cotton candy. The route had taken a day longer than expected, and Kellogg and Holsten were tired. But the weather window was holding, and the rich flavor of the summit faded as they gazed west to the Torres.

Forgoing the standard descent down the *Franco-Argentine*, they down climbed to the *Supercanaleta*, which would allow them to descend west to their gear cache in the Torre Valley. At the top of the enormous couloir, they agreed it was still too warm to rappel, and sat down to wait.

At 6 p.m., they threw their ropes down the chute and dropped over the edge. The sun had left the face, but the temperatures were warm—too warm—and rime began falling all around them. A chunk, big enough to hurt, hit Holsten in the leg. Reaching an anchor a few rappels down, they ducked into a small alcove. Neither said so, but they were both scared.

"Should we stay here?" Kellogg asked.

"Ah, shit man, I don't know," Holsten said. Below, it looked as if more sheltered terrain might offer protection from falling debris. "Maybe we should just go for it."

"All right, let's do it." Kellogg got on the rope and began rappelling. "Russian roulette, man."

When Holsten joined Kellogg at the small stance below, he clipped into the anchor and began pulling the ropes. The cord suddenly went taut—stuck.

"Get on this rope with me," Holsten said. Kellogg wrapped his hands around the rope above Holsten's and they pulled. *Crack*. Holsten heard a loud noise, like a gun going off. Both ducked as rockfall clattered down the couloir. Holsten never saw the rock, only the nightmare suddenly playing out next to him—Kellogg had been hit in the face and was dead.

Holsten thought about unclipping and throwing himself down the mountain. He yelled at Kellogg's lifeless body.

Around the time that Holsten threaded his rappel device and descended alone into the impending night, a bouquet of carnations, dahlias and tulips was delivered to a woman a continent away, with a Valentine's card that read, "Sending you my love from across the world!"

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