

Librarian's Shelf

By Melodee Pedersen

Mt. Everest Climb Program Coming to Library

September 29th at 3:00 p.m. in the Columbus Art Gallery (lower level of the library) the Friends of the Columbus Public Library present the multimedia program "The Vast Unknown: America's first ascent of Everest" based on the book of the same name by New York Times bestselling author Broughton Coburn.

It has been fifty years since the first American summit of Mt. Everest. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed his famous, "I have a dream" speech, Willie Mays became the first baseball player to make \$100,000, and Peter, Paul and Mary won their first Grammy. America was performing nuclear tests in Nevada and in November, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The United States and the Soviet Union were fierce competitors in the space race, but did you know the U.S. and the Soviets, along with the Chinese, were also in a race to see who could reach the summit of Mt. Everest first?

This mountain became yet another bone to be fought over in the quest for dominance between East and West. Hoping to give America a shot of confidence, a group of climbers vowed to be the first to the top. During his presentation, Mr. Coburn will engage us in this fast-paced odyssey, telling the story of this momentous climb and its legendary team of inspiring and troubled climbers who suffered injuries, a near mutiny, and a death on the mountain.

But it's about so much more than climbing Mr. Everest. It is a time capsule of the period, and it's about team work, dedication and the human condition. In a twist that is stranger than fiction, it is also an investigation of one of the expedition's little-known outcomes: the selection of a team to plant a CIA surveillance device on a Himalayan peak, to spy into China, where nuclear missile testing was underway.

Broughton Coburn, who is from Wyoming, has lived in the Himalaya for 20 of the past 35 years, writing, filmmaking and overseeing development and environmental conservation efforts for the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund and other agencies. He has written or edited 6 books, including the New York Times bestsellers, "Everest: Mountain Without Mercy", and the collaboration with Jamling Tenzing Norgay, "Touching My Fathers Soul: A Sherpa's Journey to The Top of Everest". In 1997 he was awarded the American Alpine Club's Literary Achievement Award.

He will be happy to answer questions after the program, and also sign copies of this exciting new title. The book will be for sale after the program.