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PEOPLE

Framingham town counsel will discuss climbing Mt. Whitney

By **Cindy Cantrell** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 16, 2013



Framingham town counsel Christopher Petrini at the summit of Mt. Whitney on April 22, 2013.

PEAK ACHIEVEMENT: After turning 50 in 2011, Framingham's town counsel, **Christopher Petrini**, decided to pursue his dreams of mountaineering adventures "while my bucket list was full and I had good health and energy."

That fall, he completed a 17-day trek through the Himalayas. Last year, he scaled Longs Peak in Colorado.

At 7 p.m. Monday at the Framingham Public Library's main branch, Petrini will share stories and photographs from his latest expedition, a four-day climb for charity on California's Mount Whitney in April. With an elevation of 14,505 feet, Mount Whitney has the highest summit in the contiguous United States.

Petrini, founding principal of Petrini & Associates P.C. in Framingham, was one of 50 hikers nationwide selected for the trek by Backpacker magazine through an essay contest. He was also the second highest donor, raising \$9,000 of the group's collective \$275,000 gift to Big City Mountaineers, which helps urban youths develop life skills through outdoor wilderness programs.

Although he faced harsher weather and overall conditions in the Himalayas, Petrini said, his trek up Mount Whitney had its own challenges. While he and his hiking companion in Nepal hired a Sherpa guide to handle the majority of their gear, Petrini carried his own 50-pound pack for this spring's California trek.

His equipment included crampons, ice axes, and ropes to navigate Whitney, with the trail including a stretch with a 60-degree pitch — the steepest he has ever faced, Petrini said. Temperatures ranged from the 20s overnight to the 70s during the day, with the sun's reflection off the snow making sunscreen another necessity.

After technical rock climbing for the final 500 feet to reach the summit, he experienced “an unbelievable feeling of elation that made me thirsty to do more in the future,” Petrini said.

He is already making preliminary plans to conquer Mount Rainier in Washington next year, and Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania with his son, Shawn, when he is discharged from the Army in 2015.

Petrini hopes his presentation at the library inspires others to challenge themselves.

“In a small way, I hope my love for the outdoors gives others a window into a passion in their own lives,” he said. “If I can inspire someone else the same way I've been inspired, that would make me feel good.”

REMEMBERING: Brookline resident **Maxim Shroyer** (inset) was born in Moscow to a Jewish-Russian literary and academic family, and spent almost nine years as a refusenik before immigrating to the United States in 1987.

Now a professor of Russian, English, and Jewish studies at Boston College, he is honoring his heritage in a new book, “I Saw It: Ilya Selvinsky and the Legacy of Bearing Witness to the Shoah,” which explores how Jewish-Russian poets became the earliest literary witnesses to the Holocaust.

The book introduces the work of Selvinsky, who witnessed a Jewish massacre outside the Crimean city of Kerch where he was serving as a military journalist in January 1942. Titled

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than 60 photographs and illustrations.

The book is based on archival and field research, including visits to the trenches, ravines, and other sites of mass shootings in 1941-42 within the former Soviet Union. The project was partially funded by a Boston College Research Incentive Grant and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation award.

Shrayer dedicated the book to the memory of his paternal grandfather, **Pyotr (Peysach) Shrayer**, a decorated war veteran who fought against the Nazis as a major in the Soviet Navy. A prolific author, scholar, and translator, the BC professor considers it to be his most important work.

“The industrialized murder of Jews in death camps is well known, but there is not as much awareness of the hundreds of thousands of Jews rounded up and crudely executed following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union,” said Shrayer, who cofounded the Jewish Studies program at Boston College in 2005. “Those who dared write truthfully about what they saw committed acts of tremendous civil courage.”

For more information, visit www.shrayer.com.

PRIZE VIDEO: The Meadowbrook School of Weston was awarded a \$1,000 runner-up prize last month for a video showcasing its new digital citizenship and literacy curriculum, as part of Natick-based Trend Micro Inc.’s fourth annual “What’s Your Story?” contest.

This is the second consecutive year that Meadowbrook was named a finalist in the competition, which is open to individuals and schools throughout the United States and Canada. Two grand prizes of \$10,000 were awarded, to an individual filmmaker and a school. Two additional filmmakers and two schools earned the runner-up prizes.

Last year, the Meadowbrook students created a video about the ramifications of cyberbullying. With this year’s theme “What Does the Good Side of the Internet Look Like?”, Meadowbrook technology teacher **Mike Scafati** said the school’s entry featured classroom lessons involving “honest and engaging discussions we have had with our students about good safety, good digital footprints, and good citizenship.”

Scafati said the theme echoes Meadowbrook’s use of technology as a tool for students to learn and collaborate with one another. Over the last year, the school implemented a digital citizenship curriculum for its students in kindergarten through Grade 8 based on Common Sense Media guidelines for using the Internet ethically and safely, with topics including citing

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“If we put this powerful equipment in kids’ hands, we owe it to them to guide them in using the technology responsibly,” he said. “The recognition from this contest was affirmation of everything we’ve done for the last year and a half to develop this curriculum: Talk about a great way to end the year.”

Meadowbrook’s video, “Good Digital Citizenship,” can be viewed online at whatsyourstory.trendmicro.com.

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE: Newton 17-year-old **Miranda Gelch** (inset) is performing in “The Sound of Music” through next Sunday at the North Shore Music Theatre, 62 Dunham Road in Beverly.

Gelch, who is a graduating senior at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Natick, and 16-year-old **Stowe Brown** of Beverly are the only two Teen Ensemble members in a cast of Broadway veterans. They are each playing the role of a novice nun.

Gelch, who has a number of regional theater credits, is making her North Shore Music Theatre debut. Brown previously appeared in the group’s production of “A Christmas Carol” and in the films “The Proposal,” starring Sandra Bullock, and “Here Comes the Boom,” with Kevin James.

For tickets and more information, call 978-232-7200 or visit www.nsmt.org.

People items may be submitted to Cindy Cantrell at cantrell@globe.com.

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