Everest, pre-monsoon statistics. The largest number of people in any single season reached the summit of Everest during the spring. An astonishing total of 183 went to the top, 101 from the south and 82 from the north. The total far surpassed the previous record of 117 climbers in the spring of 1999. On just one day, May 23, 2001, 47 successfully reached the top via the normal Nepalese route via the South Col, seven more than the previous record set in 1993 of 40 on May 10. It is thought that 50 of the climbers reaching the top during the spring had already summited in previous years, raising the grand total of individual summiteers to 1,114. Counting Sherpas and base camp staff it is estimated that the total number of people operating on the mountain throughout the season was in excess of 1,000, and whereas in 2000 only two ascents were made without oxygen, in spring 2001 the number was nine. To get a more complete picture of the population of the tent villages that sprang up, one must add uncounted dozens of trekkers, who went to base camps and even advanced base camps.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, oldest and youngest summiteers. The oldest person ever to reach the summit was a 64-year-old American physician, Sherman ("Sherm") Bull. He was joined at the top by his son, Bradford ("Brad") Bull (33). The pair were only the second father and son team to summit at the same time. Sherman Bull, whose age surpasses by one year the previous oldest summiteer, Toshio Yamamoto, a Japanese climber aged 63 in May 2000, said this had been the fifth time he had gone to Everest. When he finally made it all the way to the top, his success as the oldest summiteer didn't really sink in immediately. However, getting to the top was "a dream come true."

The youngest Everest summiteer was a 16-year-old Nepalese school boy, Temba Tshiri Sherpa, who had unsuccessfully tried to scale it from the Nepalese side in the spring of 2000 and received severely frostbitten fingers, some of which had to be amputated. Now he was back again, this time on the Tibetan side, as his own one-man team but with some help from others on the mountain. Temba later reported he was a bit frightened by the three dead bodies he encountered in one area along the route. He also had difficulty doing things like putting on his harness due to his damaged fingers. However, he had "a great feeling" when he got to the top. Now he plans to concentrate on his studies—he is in ninth grade—rather than to climb again soon, but he could change his mind if someone were to give him "a good chance."

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, the death of Babu Chiri. Babu Chiri, the incredibly strong and fast mountaineer who was also the most famous Sherpa of recent times, died on April 29 at the age of 35. His most spectacular feats on Everest include staying overnight on the summit without any bottled oxygen for 21 hours in May 1999, and then, after returning to base camp, making another complete ascent later in the same month. The following year he achieved the fastest ever ascent made from base camp to summit on the Nepalese side, when he climbed to the top in just 16 hours and 56 minutes. In May 1995 he became the first person ever to make two ascents of the mountain in the same month. He made 10 ascents of Everest, and if he had been successful in the spring, his total of 11 would have been equalled by only one person, Appa Sherpa.