



IN THIS ISSUE

1. Land and Access
2. Expeditions
3. Banff Film Festival
4. Club News
5. Conservation
6. Climbing News
7. General
8. Stories
9. From the Chair

1. LAND AND ACCESS

TRANSGRESSORS It has been brought to our attention that member(s) visiting Elandskrans Mountain Resort (Boven) have been 'demanding' that their whole group of friends (non-members) - be given the 20% discount on tariffs, which has been kindly offered to MCSA members. This is of great concern to us as this concession could be withdrawn. The resort offers MCSA card carrying members and ONE guest per member the discount. Please do not abuse this special concession. All members are requested to show their current membership card when registering.

TAKE NOTE:

Castle Gorge: Please remember to get the current code for the lock at the gate. The administrator, convenor for Land Access and the Secretary have the number. DO NOT scale the fence and do not park outside the designated parking area.

Reminder: one member one guest.

Once again please take your membership cards and show them to patrollers when requested.

BLYDEPOORT AND SWADINI:

Please take note that NO CLIMBING is allowed here.

2. EXPEDITIONS

KUKSAY EXPEDITION FEEDBACK:

By Ulrike Kiefer and Margie Boyes

This expedition was everything an expedition should be:

We were visiting areas where hardly anyone else had ever been, even the local Kirghiz didn't know the way. This caused some confusion and delay on the walk to base camp. The camels lost their way on the first day. When we were to move onto the Kuksay glacier and planned to change from camels to donkeys and porters, there were not enough of either and we had to portage part of our equipment, in total 1000kg, ourselves. Base camp was established at 4500m.

Whatever we did was a first of some sort. We had to find our own routes through unknown terrain, negotiate the moraines and crevasses of the Kuksay glacier, find access to the peaks and a feasible route up. After only one day at base camp everyone went off to explore and establish subcamps for future ascents. The first to bag a peak were Andrew Kendall, Roland Magg, Jaana Ball, Roy Kendall and Greig Stewart. They had chosen Kala Peak, 5643m, probably unclimbed, but there is some doubt and this has to be confirmed still. Next were Pawel Wuzyk, Martin Bruning and Ian Bailey on Peak 5634 (5634m), a peak never climbed before. A few days before we were due to leave Andrew Kendall and Martin Bruning climbed Peak 5640 (5640m), also a virgin peak. Laubie Laubscher, Marc van Reenen and Ulrike Kiefer tried for many days to gain access to Peak 6355, a beautiful pyramid dominating that part of the valley. In the process they climbed various ice routes up the south side of the valley hoping to discover a possible route across to 6355, but in the end they had to accept defeat. Ulrike then joined up with Roland Magg with the other unclimbed 6000m peak as their objective. They attempted a direct line up the 800m east face of Peak 6088. After a long day of non-stop climbing they were lucky to find the first possible bivvy place at about 5800m at 11h at night! On the 2nd day of their epic, within 200m of the summit, they found the conditions of the summit ridge too dangerous for further progress and they were able to down climb safely to their high altitude camp. A second ascent of Tuyuk, 6161m, was done by Pawel Wuzyk, Roy Kendall, Ian Bailey and Jaana Ball with our agent Andrey Ershov.

We were working together as a team whenever necessary, yet everyone was free to choose his own mountain and route and pursue his ambitions. Despite various problems during the walk in and a critical shortage of food at base camp, spirits were high all the time. I am proud to say that we came back even better friends than we were before.

I believe we all learned something. For some it might have been technical skills in ice climbing, for others experiencing the dynamics of an expedition team. Most of the team members were actively involved with the planning and preparations for one or another portfolio, such as equipment, food, first aid, sponsorship or logistics, and gained valuable knowledge.

This expedition was sponsored by the MCSA with a hyperbaric pressure bag, various ropes and some cash, by Furco with a satellite phone, by PVM Products with energy bars, by Techniblock with medical supplies and sunblock, by Duracell with batteries and by Bromor Foods with game. Thanks to all of them!

And from the Trekkers (not to be underestimated):

A good mix. Four from Cape Town, one from Eastern Province, two from Kwa-Zulu, one from Namibia seven from Johannesburg and one from Russia! Most of us met at the airport in Johannesburg - here the trip nearly ended for Stephanie Pienaar (E.P.) for her bag containing her air ticket, passport, traveler's cheques and credit cards was stolen. We did what we could to try and get her another ticket and passport but had to fly off with out her. To our utter amazement she popped up five days later in Bishkek (Kirghystan)...one tough and determined lady! We welcomed her with wonder and she fitted into the party effortlessly.

We spent two days in Istanbul and then flew off to Almaty (Kazakhstan) and spent the rest of the week travelling exhaustingly across the most wonderful and strange landscapes in a converted Russian army truck that shook us so much that we got quite stiff.

Three acclimatization days were arranged by our newly met Russian guide, Alexis. The first was on a mountain called Ala-Archa - outside Bishkek (where we stayed in a very grand hotel). We had a good energetic day and that evening one of the 'girls' from Cape Town had a date with fellow from SA, who worked there. She took the entire party along as chaperones! The poor fellow's face fell when he saw 14 of us! He had to hire two taxis. We had a lot of fun. We next spent two nights in a yurt at Son-Kul lake. We had discovered Kazakhstan vodka and had some very funny moments when someone would take, a good swig of what they thought was of water. The last climbing day before we started our walk into base camp was from Tash Rabat to Chatyr-Kul lake. Some of us were suffering from upset tummies and the going was hard and steep but we were all in good spirits and really needed the exercise after all the jolting (days of it) in the truck. We had mostly been eating food from roadside tea houses and the weather was hot and water had to be treated.

The country people looked Mongolian and were nomads living in yurts and tending sheep and horses...we had mare's milk to drink and mutton to eat. Beautiful rugs and woven cloth adorned people, horses and the inside of the yurts. The vegetation was strange with no trees or bushes, just rolling grassland. One could see a rain storm coming from miles away.

There had been wonderful, snow capped, mountain ranges on every horizon ever since we had arrived in Kazakhstan/Kirghystan. We crossed the Torugart Pass into China and the scenery became quite bleak and stark (though still mountainous). The 'road' tended to follow huge river beds with strong flowing mountain melt water. On the Karakorum Highway (main road to Pakistan and not tarred) we had some delay with wash-aways caused by fast flowing rivers coming off the steep mountains and depositing boulders and mud across the road, which was also washed away in many places. At one point we trekked across the mud slide and swapped with the locals in a bus stuck on the other side.

At last we arrived at Kara-Kul and our camels pitched up, and their drivers, and an amazing Chinese cook. We put on our big boots and set off up to the Kuksay Glacier. We were surrounded by high snowy mountains and steep rocky scree. The weather was cold and overcast. Spent a lot of time floundering in the river bed... some had to be rescued by camels. Sue White had not got over her tummy bug and dear Alexis (who is a medical doctor), prodded her and prescribed no food and a donkey (Sue became very attached to that donkey). We took three days to get up to base camp... quite a gain in altitude. No one was very affected by this. We saw no wild animals except marmots and furry, rat-like creatures. There were plenty of ibex skulls with amazing horns. Raptors were plentiful (we saw a Lammergeier) and, believe it or not, we saw a pair of Hoepoe at base camp! There were snow leopards and wolves in the area we were told.

When we arrived at the base camp most of the climbers were out on peaks... Ulrike suspended 200m below the summit of the peak she and Roland were attempting. Those there welcomed us kindly. Most of us had feared that we would not be particularly welcome. We felt like poor relations and not part of the expedition... we certainly were never mentioned in any way. So we were relieved to be made to feel part of the team.

We pitched our tents in a really nice spot but wondered why we had to remove so many rocks and stones... we discovered that night, when the frequent rock falls started! We got quite blasé in the end and had our own individual contingency plans... mine was to pull my expedition bag over myself. Someone actually went to sleep with his climbing helmet on.

While at base we walked across the glacier (scary deep voids with water rushing deep inside and large chunks of ice falling off into icy pools), we explored the lakes and surrounding rock and ice. We were unfortunate in that there were no small (easy) peaks to climb. We had all hoped to summit something, but

the climbing was technical and there was a constant threat of avalanches – these were as frequent as our rock falls. On the last night it snowed fairly heavily and with blizzards all the next day, made the descent grim. One poor donkey collapsed and was left for dead. When it miraculously arrived at camp I offered up my emergency space blanket which we tied around him and next morning he looked as good as new! The Urgars took much more care of their camels. The SPCA would have had a fit.

Our cook took great care of us and for breakfast we ate fried peanuts, boiled potatoes (we would warm our hands with them before eating), boiled eggs, raisins, almonds, and bread, made in a saucepan, with no lightness. Green tea... we all got to love it... and Nescafe. Lunch was always on the move so we were given bread, a boiled egg, and perhaps an Asian pear or an apple. Dinner was always amazing with many dishes appearing with delicious contents- egg plant, peppers (some seriously hot), ginger, garlic, spinach, beans, tomatoes, rice, noodles, bits of meat (not much and, hopefully, mutton). A particularly nice dish was a sort of scrambled egg with tomato and lots of unidentifiable tasty/spicy ingredients. At least four or five different dishes would appear every dinner. The climber's cook was not a patch on ours and I heard that after we had joined them they bartered a climbing rope for a sheep.

We spent a day in Kashgar on the way back and that was fun.

All in all, a wonderful trek.

Trekkers' slides will be shown at the Clubhouse on Wednesday, 7th November – the date for the Climbers' slide show still to be announced.

3. BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

All the biggest names are expected at the Mountain Club of South Africa's - Banff Mountain Film Festival on 17th October at the Linder Auditorium, and we do mean the BIGGEST... from the Himalayas and the Zambesi to the Alps and not least Yosemite. The festival showcases the world's best films and videos on mountain themes ranging from rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking and paragliding to wildlife and the environment. Each year the world's top mountaineers, climbers, producers and directors trek to Canada's Banff National Park to complete in the Banff Mountain Film Festival. A mountain film is exactly what it sounds like, a film with a mountain shown within. Naturally the festival includes all aspects of film making from the comic to the dramatic, from feature length documentaries to short epic adrenaline videos. Get your ticket for adventure. This outstanding collection of top videos and films will take you climbing awesome peaks, paddling wild waters and traveling to some of the planet's most spectacular scenery. This renowned international festival originated 25 years ago in Banff, Canada as a celebration of the outdoor spirit. Growing from a handful of films viewed by a couple of hundred people, the film festival today hosts a captive audience of 8000, showing over 130 films from around the globe. Thirty to forty of these films are then selected and screened to the enthusiasts and an international jury. Prizes are awarded in several categories before a selection of the finest films tours the world. This is the first time Banff will be screened in Johannesburg. This is no ordinary film festival and will only have one screening, so book early to avoid disappointment. The films selected include a high adrenaline kayaking video, paragliding in Nepal and a sequence on wild woman mountain biking, and naturally hardcore rock climbing. Get your tickets NOW and BRING FRIENDS, the films to be screened are unique, insightful and inspiring. Contact Uschi on 807-1310 to book, or go along to the club on a Wednesday evening.

Details:

WHEN: **Wednesday** 17th October 2001

WHERE: LINDER AUDITORIUM, JHB COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, St. Andrews Road, Parktown.
TIME: 19:00 FOR 19:30

COST: R35 per ticket. Refreshments available. Secure parking.

4. CLUB NEWS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liz Boyes and Andrew Warren have announced their engagement. Congratulations!

Laubie Laubscher (who joined this Section in 1994) married Joanne Cleveland last year. The ceremony took place in Bath (England). Laubie and Jo now live in Cheltenham. Last seen, Laubie, sporting a scruffy beard, was part of the successful climbing team on the Kuksay Expedition. Good luck to you both.

Congratulations to Cathy O'Dowd and Ian Woodall who were married in August. Both now live in Europe – Cathy in Andorra. We wish them well.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Mariette and Johannes Maritz, Deon Havenga, Vivienne Preston, Roger Galloway, Ivan Ginsberg, Sean Gilbert, Benson (Benny) Mwangi, Paul Mikula, Cally Henderson (transferred from KZN)

Application received from Brendon Zietsman.

Passed away: George Burrows, Kenneth Paterson in July 2001 and Penny Burrows in September.

Thank you to Bruce Spottiswoode, Stephen Killick and Stephen Davis for the donation of two route books: Vilanova and Terradets Spain - these are in our Library and are available to members.

Direct deposits to our bank account: Members making direct deposits to our account at Nedbank, PLEASE inform Uschi - best would be to fax a copy of the deposit slip or mention your name on the deposit. Reconciling amounts at the end of a month can be a problem if we do not know where the money came from.

PORKY HARRIS' MAP of Magaliesberg is available

Johannesburg Hiking Club borrowed the club's copy of the map and have reproduced this in booklet format, in colour. Copies are available at R80 each and orders can be placed with Uschi.

NAME AND DESIGN OF THE NEWSLETTER:

Herewith the contributions (some very rough) that have been received so far. Surely someone out there can come up with the perfect name and design. We need more ideas. Thanks to those of you who have submitted your ideas already. Please contact Margaret Boyes 788 6528 or email mboyes@icon.co.za See page 6 for designs submitted.

CLUBROOM: the clubroom has been revamped. Three new cupboards have been bought and a new carpet has been laid. Hope we can keep it friendly and tidy. Thanks to the helpers.

BARN DANCE: Please remember the 8 December at 19h00 at the Waverly Girl Guide Hall. Bring your own picnic basket. Tickets R20.00 (half for children). Bookings: Karien Spottiswoode (674 2980).

MEETS: Beginners climbing course: please note that prior booking for this course is essential. Please contact Chris Ziranek (955 1010)

WARNING:WATERVAL-BOVEN

It has been reported that in July a party of young climbers were accosted at gunpoint by six youths.

Please take care when visiting there.

5.CONSERVATION:

The joint weekend meet (Magaliesberg/Johannesburg Sections) to continue the onslaught on Crofton Weed in the Magaliesberg was well attended and our sincere thanks to everyone who found time to go and help!Work continued in 3 kloofs, viz:Castle Gorge, Mhlabatini and Dome.The problem is still enormous and further meets will be scheduled.

6.CLIMBING NEWS:

For Sports Climbers!

The benefits to sports climbers of joining the Mountain Club of South Africa:

- Access to land and crags through arrangements by the MCSA; sport climbing, trad climbing and mountaineering venues.
- Continued purchase of land and servitudes to land, for trad and sport climbing. E.g. purchase of land at the Restaurant, which includes the climbing crags: Superbowl, Hallucinogen wall, the Theatre and part of God No Wall.
- Climbing and social meets, local and international.
- Reduced fees in Kenyan Parks, Alpine huts in Europe etc.
- Option to attend trad climbing training days and meets.
- Access to finances and resources to develop sport climbing in South Africa. Example the MCSA JHB paid for most bolts at Hallucinogen wall and Flying is Fun at the Restaurant, Strubens Valley and other areas.
- The MCSA is affiliated with the UIAA and other clubs around the world, thus keeping up to date with international events and happenings.
- By joining the MCSA you can contribute to the growth of sport climbing in South Africa.
- MCSA members get discounts at climbing shops

SPORTS CLIMBING COMPETITION

Details are as follows:

Date: Sat 29 September
Time: 08h00

Venue: Plot 210, Mooiplaats, Pretoria

Cost: R30 for pre-registration OR R40 on the day Registration.Contact: Lourens Inggs 082 681-2728
The competition will be a difficulty competition i.e. normal climbing as opposed to bouldering.

7.GENERAL

MCSA CALENDAR 2002

From Neil Griffin comes news that the MCSA Calendars will again be produced for the year 2002.The theme will be "Mountains of Africa" and some stunning slides have been selected of most of Africa's mountain ranges.With 2002 being the "International Year of The Mountains" this calendar has been endorsed by the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Minister Valli Moosa.

It is hoped that more corporate orders will be placed and anyone with any corporate influence for the ordering of calendars should please contact Neil at 083-229 900 or (011) 614-3755.Price for the multi-paged gift calendar will be R65 each and the single page gift calendar, R18.50.

These will make STUNNING Christmas presents, especially for friends and relatives overseas, so let's support this - place those orders early!!!

2002 NATIONAL MEET/MINI CAMP: HEX RIVER MOUNTAINS

To diarise! The National Meet/Mini Camp in the International Year of the Mountains will be hosted by Stellenbosch Section from 28 March - 1 April 2002. Base Camp will be on the farm Erfdeel. More details later.

UIAA WEBSITE: This is back 'up and running' – access it at www.uiaa.ch

RUWENZORI RE-OPENED:

"The Uganda Wildlife Authority has recently re-opened the Ruwenzori for trekkers/climbers."This is very good news!

MOUNT KENYA:

Andreas Schenk of the Namibia Section hopes to climb Mt Kenya in February 2002.If anyone is interested in joining him he can be contacted at bearings@africaonline.com.na.(PS:Andreas was one the trekkers on the Kuksay Expedition).

8.STORIES AND MEMORIESHarry Barker, 2001

At some time during the 1950's I noticed that on the south slope of the Magaliesberg, a few miles west of Eureka Dome, a small domed Greek temple had been built.It gleamed white in the sunlight and its presence and purpose puzzled me.I promised myself that one day I would find out who had built it and why.

The opportunity to fulfill that promise only came during the 1960's , as far as I can remember.With Margot, my wife, I took the road running westward from Eureka till I found a farm road running northward in the direction of the temple.It led to a farmhouse.The farmer and his wife welcomed us and after I had explained that we wanted to visit the temple.They told us the story of how it came to be built.They said the farm had belonged to a wealthy Greek, Nomikos, who had an only son, who fell sick and was likely to die.The father invoked the help of God and swore that if his son survived, he would build a temple on the farm as an expression of thanks to God.

The son survived, and in 1952 the father kept his oath.The temple was kept open to anyone who wished to visit it.Few came to the remote area where the temple was.The farmer encouraged us to continue on the farm road to the temple and we did so, parking close to it.

My wife entered through the unlocked door and saw that the building was clean and in good order.When I remarked on this, I noticed that my voice resonated strongly and, being a natural singer, I forthwith burst into song.Never before had I heard my voice sound so flatteringly pleasing and powerful, singing the song "Early One Morning Just As the Sun Was Rising".

I realised that by some happy fluke the architect and the builder had created a building with almost perfect acoustic properties."I must bring my violin and play it here" I said to my wife."We must come again soon."That we did, after about a fortnight and, standing under the dome, I heard my 17th Century instrument sing in glory in a way I had never heard before, nor have ever heard since.The temple drew out of it the magic sounds that Mattheus Klotz had had in mind when, at Mittenwald on the Isar he had built that instrument, when Handel was still a young man.

Subsequently on several occasions I took mountaineering friends to the temple and we explored the gully rising northward to the summit. The whole area seemed spongy like a wetland, and on the slope, a kilometer or so to the west, my wife and I found a grove of Cape Chestnut trees in glorious full bloom. I know no other place in the Magaliesberg where there is a grove of these splendid trees, fifty feet or more in height. I called the gully "Temple Gully".

9. FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome home to the successful Kuksay adventurers - climbers and trekkers - and congratulations to Ulrike and her team.

Getaway magazine's David Bristow is a valued member of the club and has made comment about our handling of the Banff Mountain Film Festival this year in the September issue. The festival did contribute healthily to the Mountain Club coffers last year in Cape Town. The event is being screened in Cape Town and Johannesburg this year. Unfortunately this year it is not on a scale to accommodate the broader public in Johannesburg, but members and their friends are welcome, and invited guests and potential sponsors will be there. I would like to thank Galeo (Gary) Saintz for his efforts to get the festival screened in Johannesburg. Without his enthusiasm and contribution it would not be happening. Please support the event this year and look forward to a real splash next year. We tried to bring it to the public in Johannesburg this year but the requirement for sponsorship to do this meant interfering with plans already made elsewhere by the club. This bigger plan had to be abruptly stopped unfortunately leaving a bitter taste on the tongues of sponsors. I take full responsibility for the confusion and publicity the club has received about the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Johannesburg this year and hope that this will not adversely affect the event in the future.

Conservation efforts by Jenny Paterson and others have reached new highs this year and their contribution must be recognised and appreciated. Thanks Jenny. Cleaning up Northcliff will need a different approach to a few members on a Sunday to make any impact at all. The filth up there is astounding and disturbing.

Visits to the Drakensberg never cease to surprise and Greg's comment on the Bell trip a few weeks ago is pertinent. The whole mountainside was covered in ice after some rains and cold weather. Hooper's Route was upgraded by every hold being obscured with a layer of ice. "Every trip to the Berg is unique and the unexpected happens". Rivers and streams swell and subside within days, ice appears and melts away, water today, none tomorrow. This reminds us to always go prepared for the most harsh conditions and to appreciate and enjoy what is presented to us while we are there.

Rock climbing, mountaineering and all other forms of outdoor activities are inherently dangerous and carry significant risk of personal injury or death. Any activities undertaken in conjunction with or on the property of the MCSA are participated in at own risk. The MCSA, its members, the occupiers or owners of any land on which such activity takes place accept no responsibility for any loss injury or damage to person or property, howsoever arising, whether through negligence or otherwise. The MCSA does not recommend that anyone participate in these activities unless they are experts, seek qualified instruction or guidance, are knowledgeable about the risks involved and are willing to, and do, personally assume all responsibility
