



November 2002

- 1.From the editor:
- 2.Land & Access
- 3.Club News
- 4.Expeditions
- 5.Climbing
- 6.Stories
- 7.Events
- 8.General

## 1.From the editor:

Editorials often appear first, so here goes.

This has proved to be a bumper edition. With the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer holidays almost upon us, and many of you going away and needing days off between cranking hard, here is something to read.

After many years of being 'under the carpet', there is once again something to discuss on the long journeys to the crags. **Melville Koppies is being bolted**, and Paul Fatti speaks out against this, whilst Neil Margetts gives his viewpoints on why he supports it.

Then a story from Andrew Hoy who had to rescue someone who **rapped off the end of their ropes** half-way up a cliff.

And you should know that Andrew Porter has produced new **hard copy** Tonquani and Cedarberg Route Books.

Jenny Paterson lives it up in **Siberia**, Julia Addison has a **night out**, and **Kerry Felman gets 'high'** in the berg as part of the People on Peaks Project.

## 2.Land & Access

Frans Conradie **thanks** members for their considerate behaviour when parking on his property at Mhlab. Please remember that a parking fee of R10 is to be placed in the tin box, sign register. This also applies at Tonquani (Otto Betram's), Grootkloof. At Castle Gorge please sign register which is in the tin box just before the first stile.

**Patrollers for holiday periods.** Members who are available to patrol at Tonquani and Cedarberg over the holiday period, please contact Uschi. Your help would be appreciated.

There have been a number of **robberies** at the Restaurant (Waterval Boven). Also a break-in at Stuben's Valley. Gustav has made a number of suggestions as to what to do, but any other ideas are welcome.

## 3.Club News

### New Members

We welcome the following new members: David Grant, Richard Sharpe, Juliana & Sid Organe, Grant Rens, Rose van der Merwe, Hanna du Toit, Michael Grant, Clive Wynne, Yiding Jiang and Matt Tibenham.

With regret we advise the death of Mary Ruhle who had been a member for many years.

### Subs for 2003

At the general committee meeting held on 21 October 2002 the committee decided that the entrance fee and subscriptions for 2003 will be increased to the following:

Single membership R260.00, Married membership R390.00, country single R200.00, married country R250.00, student R130.00, Junior R70.00, family R15.00 (children of members up to the age of 13 years), senior R130.00

Entrance fee: R220.00 per applicant.

### Meetings

**Annual General Meeting:** Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Mountain Club of South Africa Johannesburg Section will be held on 12 March 2003 at 20h15 at the Waverley Girl Guide Hall, Stirling Str., Waverley

Nominations for the general committee must please reach the secretary or administrator by mid February 2003.

**Committee Meetings:** Provisional dates:- 13 January, 24 February.

**Clubhouse** closes: last club evening 11 December,

re-opens 8 January 2003

### Reminder to members:

The current ruling is that no dogs are allowed on the areas we own. With all the break-ins and robberies, maybe the club needs to seriously re-think this policy. In Europe (which generally has many more rules) for example, dogs are not seen as a problem if the owners control them. What do you think?

Please always carry your membership card especially when on MCSA property.

One member one guest rule. Get permits for your extra guests. A prospective member carrying a green card is allowed to accompany a member to the permit issue areas and does not need a permit. However, the one guest per member rule does not apply to prospective members.

### Obituary

Eva Langmore and Geordie Strachan

Reading of the deaths of Eva Langmore and Geordie Strachan, both so closely associated with the club's history, I felt profoundly sad.

Eva met John Langmore when she was a sister and he a patient in a military hospital in north Africa during World War 2. They fell in love, got married and remained devoted to each other for the rest of John's life. Eva's kind heart and sweet nature saw her care lovingly for John during his long final illness, which resulted from working underground when he was young. He was one of the countless South Africans, black and white, martyred to the God of Gold. Eva was one of those rare people who had no enemies, only friends, who will remember her with love.

Geordie, hardened by birth at Peterhead on the inhospitable eastern coast of Scotland, spent most of his life in South Africa but remained essentially a Scot. Robustly strong, he was apprenticed as a builder. HE was a hard worker with a lively conscience. His first employer was the Pretoria Municipality. There he found that he was not given enough work to satisfy that conscience and he resolved to complain to the foreman, "sir" he said, "I've too little work to do and I'm not earning my pay". - The result, as he told me, was a cynical pat on the shoulder and a truly classical response "don't worry, Geordie my son, you're working for a strong firm".

The outbreak of World War 2 saw Geordie in the army with the South African engineers, where his characteristic courage was rewarded by the bestowal on him of the rarely given Military Medal for extreme bravery in battle. After the war he set up his own builder business and became head of the Master Builders' Association, distinguishing himself by his constant charitable acts to assist the needy out of his own pocket.

At the end - with approaching age - the call of Scotland took him back to Peterhead to live out his last years. I think of him as a courageous, powerful rock climber, and a hearty singer at campfires.

May he now be enlivening the chorus of celestial song.

Harry Barker. August 2002.

## 4. Expeditions

### ALTAI EXPEDITION, SIBERIA

Jenny Paterson

In response to the concern expressed in the last Newsletter: yes, we made the connecting flight? but not without a few tense moments and a long delay. We eventually arrived in Moscow with sufficient time to visit Red Square before picking up Marina Ershova (wife of Andrey Ershov, who co-ordinated both this and last year's Kuksay Expedition), Dr Alexei Shalaev, our guide, and Paul Stoddart, who had flown in from Australia early that morning.

After leaving Moscow at 11.30pm, we arrived in Barnaul, Siberia at 6.50am after a 4000km, three-and-a-half hour flight -- I think we crossed two time zones! We were joined by Sasha Parchin, our local guide, and Roma, our cook. Our destination: the Altai Mountains, one of the major mountain systems of the Asian part of Russia. These mountains lie at the junction of Russian South Siberia, China and Mongolia. There is no vehicular access beyond the village of Tyungur, which was a two-day, 800km bus ride from Barnaul, followed by a three-day walk-in to the Akkem Lake, where we were to set up base camp.

The Altai region derives its name from a Mongol word, altan, meaning "golden", and the morning we started walking was truly that, with bright blue skies with cotton-wool clouds. We set off with our daypacks, heading up the Kucheria alley, while the horses transporting our baggage were going up the gentler Akkem Valley. We walked through glorious meadows and thick forests next to the Katun River and were introduced to wild berries that had the Russians foraging like squirrels in every bush and thicket.

But slowly, the white clouds turned grey, then dumped their contents on us. As if that weren't bad enough, there were no horses, baggage, food or tent except Sasha's (homemade out of an old parachute) at the overnight stop. However, Marina stopped a local family, explained our predicament and was generously given the remainder of their food: one packet of oats! Everyone emptied their daypacks? some things, like nuts, dried fruit and apples, could be added to the porridge, while others (chocolate and nougat) would be kept for breakfast -- if we survived the night!

While Marina was cooking, Sasha set off on a recon. He returned at about 8pm: the good news was that he had found our horses; the bad news was that they were on the ridge behind us. Because of the steep slope and slippery path, they couldn't come to us but we could go to them. This was achieved with some difficulty as it was dark and still drizzling, but we were happy to be reunited with the horse drivers, horses, Roma and our baggage.

The next two days were uneventful: the rain kept falling; we doggedly went uphill and down the other side, only to be faced with more ups and downs on paths thick with gooey mud that had us slithering, sliding and sometimes falling. Eventually we got to the Akkem Lake (2050m) and pitched our sopping-wet tents, delighted at the prospect of a rest. About 200m from camp, nesting in the forest, was a sauna. We wallowed for an entire hour! Later I had a bowl of Roma's delicious borscht and a cup of tea. It was a cold night but our sleeping bags had miraculously kept dry.

The next day the gods were good to us: it was a spectacularly WOW! Day. In the distance was the beautiful, snow-topped, ice face of the Akkem Wall, nearly vertical and more than 1000m high, and the Pic Delone-Belukha-Altai Crown cirque. Looking from left to right we stared at Belukha East (4506m), one of our goals and where we hoped to fly the South African flag for the first time, Belukha West (4460m) and Altai Crown (4167m), all shimmering like ice castles in the morning sun. Delone Peak was obstructed by another peak. On the right was Bronya Peak (3,260m), another of our goals, and, in the centre, the humungous Akkem Glacier.

Five South Africans summited Bronya Peak, and our flag was flown atop Mt Belukha for the first time by Paul, Alexei, Marina and Sasha.

The trip wasn't without other hiccups, but all that will have to be included in an article for the website. I am going through the photographs for a slide show: it's not easy deciding what to exclude as I want to share every bit of this wonderful country. Check the meets/event schedule attached for when that's going to happen.

## 5. Climbing

### Bolting Debate

I recently had the privilege of representing the MCSA at a conference in Innsbruck, in the Austrian Tyrol, convened by the German and Austrian clubs in conjunction with the UIAA. The objective of the conference was to draw up a statement on Mountains and Mountaineering, which would represent a tangible outcome from the 2002 International Year of Mountains. This document will soon be put to the UIAA General Assembly, in the form of the "Tyrol Declaration on Mountains and Mountain Sports", for formal ratification and adoption by the world's mountaineering associations.

I was involved in the working group on "Mountaineering Ethics" and as might be expected, the debate on bolting loomed large. The position which the group eventually adopted was that the guiding principle should be "leave no trace", but that other considerations such as safety, local tradition and not spoiling it for others should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to place a bolt. I could proudly state that in South Africa the conflict between the "traditional" and "sport" climbers had largely been resolved and that little bolting took place on cliffs where traditionally natural protection was used.

Imagine my disappointment when, shortly after returning from the conference, I cycled to my favourite bouldering crag at Melville Koppies to discover that five bolted lines, each one with its name and grade painted on the rock, had been put up while I was away. Up till that time the only bolts were those few which had been placed at the top of the crag some years ago by Clive Curson and Neil Margets on behalf of the MCSA, for use in top-roping. The new bolts are large, obtrusive and very closely spaced. After I had calmed down I left a note tied to one of the bolts, expressing my disappointment at the defacing of the crag and requesting that no more be placed. That evening I received a phone call from the person responsible for putting up the bolts, explaining that he was wanting to increase the number of bolted routes available for sport climbers around Johannesburg, as the bolting area at Strubens Valley was now becoming very crowded. He knew that Northcliff Ridge was a protected area so he could not do his bolting there, and the next best crag around was at Melville Koppies. (Actually, the Melville Koppies are also protected.) He promised not to put up any more bolted lines.

I have returned to the crag since then and have discovered that he has, in fact, put up two more lines. I find this insensitivity to climbing ethics, especially by a member of the Club, very disappointing. In the note I tied to the bolt I said that if he was unable to solo a climb on this crag then he should use a top-rope (I regularly solo four of the seven routes which he has bolted). I fail to see the difference between top-roping a climb and so-called leading it on bolts, especially if they are as closely spaced as those at Melville Koppies. A similar experience can surely be achieved by giving the climber a slack top-rope belay?

Sadly, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to undo the damage, and future climbers have now been denied the opportunity, which I was fortunate enough to enjoy, of discovering the lines for themselves, and instead all they can now do is join the dots between the bolts. I believe that, once the "Tyrol Declaration" is approved, the MCSA should make every effort to publicise it, both amongst its members and more broadly. Hopefully, a general awareness of the principles contained therein will help prevent incidents such as this in the future.

Paul Fatti

#### Neil Margetts Response

On finding Paul's note, I phoned him to "confess" to bolting the crag. Paul explained his reasons for not wanting the crag bolted and I agreed to respect his wishes and not bolt any further lines. I have not been to Melville since speaking to Paul.

My reasons for initiating bolting there are as follows:

There are very few Sport climbing areas in and around Jo'burg. Strubens Valley, the most popular area is pretty crowded on weekends. To me, there is clearly a need for more sport climbing areas. Although Melville is a reserve, the area near the crag is pretty trashed by the informal settlers, and I reasoned that this would be a good area to develop as the bolts would not be any worse than the litter and environmental damage that is already there. I also believe that the regular presence of climbers may keep the "tramps" at bay.

As Paul points out, the routes are soloable, but to lead them is just as challenging and bolts make it a lot safer to lead, especially since most sport climbers are not MCSA members and have never benefited from the training we members have received by climbing with experienced MCSA members such as Paul.

Which brings me to my next point. The fact that the bolting of Melville crag has continued, (not by myself but by non MCSA members) to me clearly indicates a) the need for more sport climbing routes that are close to Jo'burg and easily accessible, and b) that something is amiss in the club. Surely all those sport climbers out there should be welcomed into the MCSA fold and educated regarding safety, climbing ethics, the MCSA objectives and general environmental concerns. I have approached many non-MCSA climbers and invited them to join. Most of them feel that there is nothing in it for them and that the MCSA is rather stern with very little sympathy for the needs of the sport climber. Perhaps our image needs changing, as the number of sport climbers out there is growing rapidly and surely it would be far better to have them under the wing of the MCSA where there is a measure of control?

I gave Paul my word that I would not bolt any further lines and I have kept my word. I chatted to the person who continued the bolting, he is not an MCSA member and feels that the MCSA has no jurisdiction over which routes he bolts as long as he does not bolt on MCSA property. He has obtained permission from the Melville Koppies Management Committee to develop the area for recreational purposes (in this case rock climbing) as long as the cave area is avoided due to its archaeological significance and the vegetation is not damaged any further than what it already is by the informal settlers. He has given them an undertaking to clean up the area as part of the bolting project.

Surely we should have this person and others like him on our side, there is an enormous wealth of experience and knowledge held by particularly the older members of the club and I feel that the new generation of sport climbers can benefit from this storehouse. The flip side is that if we don't incorporate them into the club, and there is not compromise on both sides, in the future we stand to lose a lot of what the MCSA stands for and a lot of the hard work done regarding conservation will be undone.

#### And Alard's Response (Heads up Bolting Sub-committee)

After reading Paul Fatti's letter on bolting, I do agree with Paul that we must be selective in the areas we choose to bolt, as once a route is bolted it is very difficult and unsightly to remove the bolts. I look forward to reading the "Tyrol Declaration" that Paul mentions in the letter and hope that we can use this document as a guideline for setting up regulations governing bolting and bolt-free areas.

I visited the Melville Koppies, meeting Neil Margetts at the crag, and he showed me the bolted routes and explained his views on starting the bolting at Melville Koppies.

Melville Koppies was not a very popular climbing crag, and now that it has been bolted it is sure to see a lot more climbing traffic. In my opinion bolting of these routes will benefit sport climbing in Johannesburg, but a procedure needs to be put in place to control random bolting. If Neil had approached the MCSA before bolting at Melville Koppies, I believe the MCSA would have discouraged the bolting.

Melville Koppies is a protected area, and most of the routes could have been top-roped. This weighs negatively on the fact that these routes have been bolted.

The bolting at Melville Koppies shows us that we must act now, to get guidelines in place governing bolting and boltfree areas.

**What do you think???**Vote on-line at [www.supersport.co.za/climbing](http://www.supersport.co.za/climbing)

## 6.Stories

### Magaliesberg Meander – tales of a prospective member

Five of us (three girls, three guys) went kloofing (supposedly Retief's Kloof - wherever that is) and were having an awesome time until the obstacles became far too perilous to continue (a 6m waterfall), so we had to turn back, and just got out the ravine by nightfall. We then tried to find the path we'd come up and got close, but by 9pm were too exhausted to navigate by the light of the moon what was an extremely steep and dangerous descent, even in the daytime.

So we ended up spending a very cold, hungry, uncomfortable winter's night (I had an extra flannel shirt and windbreaker, thank goodness, but the others were in shorts and T-shirts) on top of the mountain. We didn't know it, but my friends were frantic and spent all night phoning hospitals and traffic departments. The Mountain Search and Rescue was called in and had two Defence Force aircraft at the ready to come and locate us, as well as 12 men on the ground. How embarrassing!

We waited until it was light enough to see fairly clearly and then trekked down. It was a bit of an ordeal, but we were very very lucky to have two awesome guys, Garry Morrison and Grant Jones, with us. They remained calm and actually got us to within an hour of our destination by scouting ahead. Pretty scary stuff! And I've never been so glad to have a smoker in the party - Sally's lighter made things a lot warmer.

Julia Addison

### PEOPLE ON PEAKS

In September a number of members were out there climbing peaks all over the country. They were invited to submit stories and photos under 'duress' of getting a prize. Thanks to everyone who submitted the stories. The winning one is published here. All (together with photos) are on the website. Check out <http://hb.mcsa.org.za/meets>

A very successful weekend. Peaks or routes climbed.

Mitre – Phillip Welshman & Sue Blaine.

Saddle – Chris Ziraneke, Andreas & Ulrike Kiefer.

Monk's Cowl - Roland Magg, Dave Tyrer & Steve Davis.

The Bell – Greg Devine and party.

These all in the Drakensberg. Also playing in the mist in the berg were Jenny Paterson on Sterkhorn and Roy Kendall try the route up Giants, but were foiled by the mist in route finding.

In other places, Russ Dodding and Heather Murch, dashed out to Wellington's Dome or Blinkkoppe and got a route in before it got hot.

Some folks also went up to Blouberg, others spied out Melville Koppies and there were even members in distant countries like Norway and the States who managed to bag peaks.

This was the winning story by Kerry Feldman (photos taken out here.)

## Reaching for the Cowl – Kerry Feldman

Yawn, poke, groan... and Adam and I were out of bed at 4am to load the car and head over to Roland Magg's place for a weekend ascent of Monk's Cowl. International Year of the Mountains and all that – means avoiding flat stuff.

The rule, so I am told, is that if you are on time, Roland is still having breakfast, and if you are late, he's been packed and ready to leave for an hour before you arrived. Luckily for us, Roland was having breakfast while Dave Tyrer carefully videoed interesting shots - yawns, close-up's of juice, the sink....

Five of us squashed into Roland's bakkie and we were off. Not sure who had had the most sleep the night before (the average was 3 hours - we're all late packers), but a good kip before breakfast at Harrismith was rather necessary. Steve filled in some boring bits of road and kept us going with fascinating tales of Cambodia and his six months of teaching and travelling there.

Nando's at a chilly Harrismith, out past Sterkfontein dam, and then down the winding road to Champagne Castle. Deposited the five of us rather sleepily in the parking lot at 11am on Saturday morning, ready to heft packs loaded with climbing gear and, as I was later to discover, the most amazing amount of food.

The winding trail that takes you up to the contour path was a bit breathless and livened by a pretty 2m long green snake, but at the top, the Drakensberg spread out before me in misty starkness. Wow! All the flowers were out and since the grass has had time to grow back, the lower Berg was green and beautiful.

Having decided to forsake Keith 'Toilet Bush' camp (for those of you who may object to the name, please read the book entitled 'How to S\*\*\* in the Woods' first), we headed out towards Monk's Cowl and walked as far as we could before dark. Finding a nice stream along the way, we did the gear-explode thing and camped on a spur that looked out over the Little Berg all the way to twinkling Winterton and moonrise. And the culinary experience began (Hint to all women – Adam, Roland, Dave and Steve are great outdoor cooks, not to mention LoadMonsters).

Up with a Mountain Club-style Alpine start, we shuffled off through the mist to Cowl Fork in its glen of protea trees, and made it in time for an early lunch. Monk's Cowl kept on peering at us through the clouds - enough to lure any man onward and upward - so Roland, Dave, Adam and Steve succumbed and emptied the unnecessary things like tents and clean clothes from their packs. The plan was to make the cave on the Monk's Cowl pass.

Note to the reader, when approaching from Cowl Fork, the cave is high up on the left hand pass, and not the right!

For my first Berg pass, it was an amazing experience. Rated a bit harder than Ship's Prow, we scrambled up waterfalls, screens, and through vegetation until we reached the rockfalls at the base of the pass. About half way up there is a large mushroom-shaped rock, and here you can choose whether you want to go left or right. The mist and dusk closed in again around this point, so we headed up the pass to the right and kept on going for over an hour... until finally Adam and I stumbled over Dave (who'd gone ahead with Steve and Roland) in his sleeping bag and found ourselves at the top of the pass. In true Mountain Club fashion, we celebrated our pass summit with tea.

At about 7pm Steve and Roland emerged from the mist blanketing Monk's Cowl on our left and we decided supper was more important than finding a cave. Couscous a la Adam (with fresh mushrooms, peppers, herbs and salami) went down really well, as did the tuna-style pasta a la Steve. Chocolate in hand we made nests in the Berg grass and chanced the weather. The wind howled up the pass from Keith Toilet Bush and just missed us, so it was a comfy if rather cold night.

Note from the writer – down sleeping bags rule!

On Monday morning I was treated to one of the most profound experiences of my life - waking above the clouds and watching the sun rise in pastel colours below me. Snuggled in my sleeping bag,

I watched the shadows fly over Champagne Castle and the wall of the Cowl.

But the boys were keen, so we traversed the steep grassy slopes of Monk's Cowl, and made our way to the left fork. A scramble up and we were in position to start climbing. Roland led the first pitch, nice easy 13 (I think) to a sheltered ledge, and then Steve started the second pitch and led out to a dead end. Some refactoring later, Roland tried another route and made it on hairy rock (if you know Drakensberg rock then that's an understatement) to the second belay point which included an ancient piton. And from there, it was a relatively non-scary last pitch to the summit, where the wind howled icily and the Monk tried to scratch the itchy places on its head... Roland, Dave and Steve.

At this point, I have to admit that I decided after the first pitch that summits were cold, scary, and that Drakensberg rock was even more freaky. So I watched the start of the second pitch while hanging onto grass, and went for a head start down the pass instead, with Adam. I guess you could say that I summited on both passes and one pitch.

Going down was hard on the knees, but with all the clouds blown away, the views were outstanding. Down the slides, through the waterfalls, a lunchtime swim in a pool, and some vegetation bashing, and Adam and I were back at Cowl Fork, in time for late afternoon tea. It was about 45 minutes before Roland arrived, followed by Steve, and then Dave in socks and Rockies. The boots were up for auction after he got R5.00-sized blisters... but the best offer was R25.

The highlight of supper was a chocolate fondue and Eet-sum-mores, after which we all fell into bed with gratefulness. Though turning over that night was painful!

We had a leisurely start on Tuesday morning, armed with walking sticks, Rockies and tissues (in Dave's case, as he was flu-ish), and the video camera which survived a trip to the summit the day before. We were five very satisfied people who ambled slowly past Wonder Valley. There were deer on the hillsides, we met a baby mole, and two eagles flew sentinel above us. The trek across the flowered plains halted at the river for lunch, then continued down the trail past countless gapers until we found ourselves back in the Champagne camping grounds.

I guess no trip is complete until you describe the bliss of hot showers, stopping for Magnums and chocolate milk, and standing at Sterkfontein dam with the wind in your hair and your heart full of Berg memories. Or the Wimpy tight muscle shuffle and fight for the right to be the one to hang onto the stair-rails when you pause for supper on the way home.

As part of a first wedding anniversary - awesome.

Oh yes, it was a good year of the mountains too! Despite the fact that Roland forgot to wear the T-shirt for his summit pic.

Kerry Feldman, September 2002

## Rescue of Mark Grey – Andrew Hoy (edited down from 4500 words to 1000 odd by the person who meanders the Magaliesberg in the dark)

There always seems to be a rescue on Rob Thomas's birthday, so I packed my gear. Just as well – I was reaching for a beer when someone said there was a call.

It seemed there was a person, Mark, who had lost his ropes and had no way of going up or down. Graeme and Karin King volunteered to come along and borrowed kit. Mark had said it was 10m to the ground, so the plan was to absell to a pick-off rescue. Warren wanted to know if should he braai my wors in the meantime, as we weren't likely to be long. I told him to wait.

Eventually we found Magalies Park and I phoned Mark. "If my back is to the Haartebeespoort dam and I am facing the mountain, which way do I walk?" I asked. "Turn left," he said, "about 500m later the game fence ends and that's where you start up the mountain."

About 2km later, we phoned Mark. Oops, wrong way! Eventually we start up the mountain. Graeme is in front, with Karin, who had no head torch, in the middle. Suddenly Graeme's torch goes out. Yep, blown globe.

Being mountaineers, we head straight up for the saddle. I think there are trees in front of me, but they turn out to be the cliff face. Rob phones; he wants an update. As I tell him our problem, I can hear people partying. Maybe I should have downed six beers.

A while later we break out through some trees and build a cairn so we can find the descent route later. The going gets easier. We are now on top of the mountain. A winter solo ascent in the dark. In an hour or so it will be spring, although it will still be dark.

We must now head along the ridge for about 2-3 km. It's a good night to be in the hills. My spirits lift. I blow my whistle so that Mark can talk us in, but it is difficult as the wind is making a noise. The phone rings and it is Mark: he can hear us. He says his ropes are near some gullies going down. We search every gully we come across. Sometimes we are forced back as the gullies cliff out. I blow the whistle again. We hear a voice answer back. But from where? We think we might have to wait for daylight and send for back up -- I definitely want to get the rest of the team out of bed!

I see some black tape around a rock. Yippee! We've found him. Then I notice a shackle joining the tape. Oh oh, someone with little experience.

We have done the search part of the mission; now for the rescue.

I get ready to go over the edge. I can't see the bottom. I make sure there is a big fricking knot on the end so that I do not abseil off my rope. It is getting cold in the wind now. Mark has tied his ropes to the black sling. Not a good idea as the friction on the two may melt one through. Lower down I see the 9 mm rope is a bit frayed. He will definitely not be coming up those ropes. Sixty meters and I'm still abseiling in the dark. I have yet to see Mark. Eventually I draw level with him. I have a sling ready so I can do a snatch rescue. But how far to the ground? I free my remaining rope and throw it down. I do not hear it hit anything. I abseil down and touch down onto some rock. My rope is stretched tight. This is not a ledge but rather a seriously sloping face, which needs protecting. I look around and see the most perfect bollard ever. The mountain gods are with us tonight. I hook on to the end of the rope with my daisy chain and get off my Stop. The rope shoots up but I am still attached. I have now abseiled 120m on a single drop. A personal record.

Mark gets onto the rope. Eventually he breaks free and swings to the right. Mark and I are now together, so I introduce myself. He is desperately clinging to the grass. I guess old habits die hard.

Mark asks how much the rescue costs, and I say "nothing", although we gladly accept donations, especially those of pizza and beer. I tell him to sit tight as I will be back as soon as I know what is below us. I start abseiling and 50m later reach the ground. So much for Mark's estimate of 10m! I prussic back up, hook Mark up to the ropes and he abseils down.

Now that we are on the ground we start the walk out. Mark has no torch, the grass is very thick and we cannot see our footing. I trip and slide, but a quick systems check reveals that only my ego is bruised.

Suddenly we hit a road. Bonus. No more bundu-bashing. But which way? I have already gone the wrong way once tonight. We head left and soon see a sign pointing to the exit. But when we get to the gate there is no one to let us out. We have to climb over the electric fence. Mark finds out the hard way that it is actually connected.

We phone Freda, who promptly arrives with chocolates and cokes. Now to get Graeme and Karin off the mountain. We drive to where the game fence ends. We will wait here for them, as this is where they should pop out.

I phone Graeme and he says they are trying to find the descent gully but are coming across deep ravines. They decide to bivvy until daylight. I phone Rob and send Mark and Freda home. Rob and Warren will come and join me while we wait for daylight.

When Rob and Warren arrive they have tea and sandwiches. It is now getting light and we have fun waiting: motorists think we are cops, so they slow down. About an hour and half after first light, I am reunited with Graeme and Karin. We then all head back to Rob's place for a breakfast of wots -- which Warren had still not cooked -- and eggs. Graeme removes his dancing shoes to find that he has several blisters. After a clean up, we head home for a well-deserved rest.

## 7.Events

29 November: **Dinner/Dance**

When :Friday 29 November

Venue:Holy Rosary Sports Club

Adjutant Road

Elma ParkEdenvale

Cost:R75/person

Price includes meal and disco. Cash bar is available. Tickets will go on sale in September. Awards of serious and dubious nature will be presented.For further information contact Uschi or Cheryl.

## 8.General

**FOR SALE:**

**Route Books:**

Andrew Porter has been busy.Not only do the minutes of committee meetings come out the very next day (this must surely be a first for the MCSA), but Andrew has put together **HARD COPY ROUTE BOOKS** with revised maps of Upper Tonquani and Cedarberg, Lower Tonqs, Boulder Complexes.They are available from the club at a cost of R20 and R30 respectively.

Andrew gets his updated route info from Joffrey's [www.saclimb.co.za](http://www.saclimb.co.za) website.Thanks Joff for having a database driven site like this.

### Contributions to 2002 MCSA Journal

Members are encouraged to submit articles and photographs for the 2002 Journal as soon as possible. The closing date for the submission of contributions is 15 January 2003. Original colour slides may be sent by registered post and will be returned in the same way (after the Journal has been published). Authors should note that the Editor reserves the right to accept or return

articles, as well as the right to edit to the extent considered necessary.

Please post your contributions to The Journal Editor, MCSA: Cape Town Section, 97 Hatfield St, Cape Town, 8001; or fax to 021 461 8456 (marked for attention Ezan Wilson); or email to [ezan@iafrica.com](mailto:ezan@iafrica.com).

#### MEETS

Hi everyone, just a brief word from me. Firstly I would like to say a big thank-you to all of you who have lead meets this year. Without your contribution the club would not be what it is today. Secondly, I would like to hear your ideas/suggestions for the meetslist. New venues are always welcome as they add variety to the list. Thirdly, I appeal to those members who feel they would like to make a contribution by becoming a meetleader. The frequency of meets lead need only be once a year, at most.

Here's looking forward to hearing from you, and producing a meetslist that appeals to all.

Keep on climbing!

Regards, Rance (Meets-convenor 2002/3)

(646-8907, 083 740 6164, [rtmcintyre@mweb.co.za](mailto:rtmcintyre@mweb.co.za)).

#### THANK YOU

Thank you to Vincent Carruthers, who, on two occasions walked with us at Castle Gorge - relating the history and geology of the Magaliesberg.

To all who patrolled, did tea/bar duty, gave slide shows/ talks, were meetleaders we thank you.

#### FIRST-AID COURSE

In September the Jhb section facilitated a first-aid level 1 course, run by Lorraine Doyle of ANT (Africa Nature Training). 10 people, mainly consisting of meetleaders and trainers attended 4, 3hr night sessions and one full Saturday in learning all about first aid. The Jhb Section subsidised half the costs of the course. We plan to facilitate more of these courses periodically. The next one is being co-ordinated by Robert McCarthy, 082 337 9216. Give him a buzz if you are interested in attending. The cost will probably be R320 and the MCSA undertakes once again to subsidise the course for successful applicants.

#### Advertising

Anyone wishing to advertise in the JHB Section's newsletter please contact the editor, Roland, on 656 6544.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

If any of you have changed any of your contact details, i.e. email, postal or home address, telephone numbers, etc, please inform the administrator (Uschi). Lotsa people moan about not getting timely (or any information) on club events, but most of the time it is **your fault** if we do not have the correct (or any) details for you. We send out reminders via an email mailing list to do with many things, like slide shows, change of access info, sales, break-ins, etc, but if we do not have your email address you'll never know. So Pleeeaaase.

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.

## Africa Nature Training

### let's talk....FIRST AID

Africa Nature Training is proud to have supplied Level 1 First Aid training to 10 members of the Mountain Club of South Africa in September 2002.

All members passed their practical evaluation with flying colours – congratulations to each member!

☐ Level 1, 2 & 3 First Aid and CPR Courses

☐ Certificates issued by the South African First Aid League and Resuscitation Council of Southern Africa

Quotes from participants:

"Enjoyable", "Outstanding!"

### let's talk.... SHORT COURSES, GUIDED WALKS IN KRUGER, AND FUN!!!

Join Africa Nature Training's expert lecturers for fascinating courses that will enhance every safari and bush holiday you take for the rest of your life!

☐ Bush cuisine, 4x4 driving, Photography

☐ Astronomy, Earth Sciences, Plant Studies, Animal  
Studies

(011) 646-4268

[info@africanaturetraining.co.za](mailto:info@africanaturetraining.co.za)