



May 2003

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Newsletter May 2003

"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."
-- Sir Edmund Hillary

1.FROM THE EDITOR:

Talk about déjà vu: In the early 1980's I had the privilege of editing the MCSA newsletter – in those days, friends were people, quick-draws were something cowboys used, chalk was for school-teachers, and all climbing was trad climbing. But the hardest grades were still in the early twenties and the young turks were just starting to make names for themselves: We regarded a Blouberg climb as a full-day and night affair, until Kev Smith and (was it George Mallory?) set a record of leaving Johannesburg, walking up Blouberg, doing five routes, and getting back to Joeys, all within a 24 hour period.

So the climbing world has moved on, and the newsletter moves on too. But some of the problems remain the same – we are still concerned with access issues, still worried about conservation and encroachment by man and exotic plants, the bolting debate continues. We are faced with new challenges as well – how to be relevant and representative in the new South Africa, how to meet increased pressure on mountain resources being driven by the newer sports of adventure racing, mountain biking, quad biking, 4X4 trails and so on.

So roll on the newsletter where everything changes while staying the same.

In this newsletter, we have a report of a rescue of a paraglider who crashed at Hartebeespoort, an article on climbing at Blouberg, and some feedback on the International Climbing Meet in the Cape in March 2003. Plus all the usual informative snippets and goodies

Terry White

2.NEW COMMITTEE:

There is a new Jhb Section committee for 2003/2004 - see reverse of meet/club events schedule.

There is also a new MCSA President in the form of our own Roland Magg, and there is a new MCSA EXCO.

3.LAND & ACCESS:

Help us keep our access rights: It has been brought to our attention that (some) members are not observing the access 'rules'. Once again we stress that PLEASE members always have their membership cards on them and to show them when asked to do so. Also one member and one guest applies. Get permits for your extra guests.

Exception: when attending a meet and you bring a guest we request that the R15 non members fee is paid for that guest.

Please do not arrive earlier than sunrise and do not arrive or leave after sunset. We have had a report that members arrived at Grootkloof after 10pm. This is NOT acceptable and our relationship with landowners could be placed in jeopardy with this kind of behaviour. Always be courteous.

NO CAMPING ALLOWED IN KLOOFS

Please familiarise yourselves with the correct access information - as stated in the enclosed flyer or phone the Land & Access convenor or the administrator.

Access to Grootkloof: At a club meet in March, it was clear that a number of club members were unaware of the new access route – needed to be taken to avoid trespassing across the land of sensitive owners. So here is a description of the new access path. Please use it.

Ronnie & Dennis Bartlett's place: Drive about 200 m past Sparkling Waters Hotel and look out on your right-hand side for signs to the Bartlett's place ("Kranskloof Hiking Trails/Grootkloof parking"). Drive in, park where indicated, sign book on the stoep and pay R10 per car. A small amount for security!

Walk back to the entrance and back along the road for ~ 200 m, to a small silver-painted gate with an indistinct MCSA logo on it and a white sign "Grootkloof" (Note: not the pedestrian/gate to the right of the motor gate. This goes to a worker off Ms Joan von Maltitz's house). Follow the footpath for ~100 m up to the first telephone pole and turn right (south) at a beacon there. Follow a line of beacons over the hill – no footpath – up to the clear footpath that starts at the fire break. This new path is newly beacons – until it is well-trodden – up to where it joins the old footpath.

Members are urged to make use of this parking for day visits so as to relieve pressure on the Sparkling Waters parking which was really only officially organised for overnight parking. If too many people park at Sparkling Waters, we will soon have to park in the vlaktes there.

Please note: that although frequently used in the past – walking straight across the road from Bartlett's parking and following that road (Kranskloof Hiking trails) and footpath to Ysterhoutkloof, puts you squarely onto Ronnie Bartlett's land and Joan von Maltitz's depending if you get lost – and this amounts to trespassing.

The west entrance to Ysterhoutkloof as well as the south-west entrance to Grootkloof are actually on Ronnie's property and are strictly out of bounds. The parking area on Ronnie Bartlett's place is to be closed after dark, due to the inconsiderate actions of some members and visitors, and no-one should try to get access to the area or disturb the Bartletts after dark.

Conservation: Some work has been done in Tonquani: restoration of the picnic spot; some path stabilising on Kitchen Gully. Visitors are asked to please respect this work and to be careful in Kitchen Gully. In particular, please stay on the south-western path leading from the Campsite at the top down into the Kloof.

Members are also reminded of the next Eco Meet scheduled for 1st June: we'll be tackling Crofton Weed in Castle Gorge.

4.CLIMBING

Night Rescue from Hartebeespoort cliff face : News story

Date of Incident: Sunday, 2003-03-30 ±15h40 - 19h30

In a hazardous and challenging rescue operation involving members of the Emergency Medical Services, Fire Services, South Africa Police Services Air Wing, South African Air Force and the Mountain Club of South Africa a severely injured paraglider pilot was rescued from the 150m high cliffs at Hartebeespoort cable-way just after dark on Sunday evening. The paraglider pilot, who crashed into the cliff Sunday afternoon and tumbled tens of metres was eventually brought to a halt when his canopy snagged on the cliff face. While an Oryx helicopter hovered perilously close to the cliff in darkness, the paraglider pilot and various rescuers were winched aboard.

The accident occurred 200m west of the cableway when the pilot of the paraglider took evasive action to avoid a mid-air collision with another paraglider. This caused his paraglider to spin and, losing altitude fast, he was unable to correct the problem before hitting the cliff and down it. His fall was brought to a stop when the canopy snagged on the cliff, leaving him lying on a sloping ledge with severe fractures.

Bystanders and paramedics scrambled down to help him but could not move him, so the Air Force and SAPS were asked to help. Climbers put up ropes and abseiled down to the ledge, followed by a doctor with a stretcher. It rapidly got dark while rescuers secured him in the stretcher and the abseil ropes were pulled up to reduce the risk to helicopters. The Oryx helicopter used its lights to illuminate the cliff as it hovered with the tips of the blades 4m from the rock, hoisting everyone from the small ledge. The man was taken to Unitas hospital in Pretoria.

Rob Thomas' observation: "In discussions with the paragliding community (some of whom are also MCSA members) after the rescue made it abundantly clear that some club members are not aware of their own club's rescue team availability while those who do know are painfully uninformed of how to call for rescue. This needs to be addressed at both sections, possibly through a club-evening slideshow and repeated newsletter inserts".

For Mountain Rescue emergencies call (011) 315-0203. Please have all relevant information available including your name, contact number, location and the nature of the injury.

We suggest you capture this phone number into your cell phone now. Yes, do it, now. Go on, the newsletter will wait.... Done it? Fine – read on...

A Blouberg Experience

By Chris Ziranek

We were at the top of pitch 7 of 'Hey Jude' on Blouberg, three pitches to go, and it was 5 in the afternoon. Below was the challenging hand-jam grade 20 pitch which I had aided up, knowing that it was more like

21 going on 22. Paul had followed me, miraculously getting out all of the gear that I thought would be wedged in solidly from my standing on it. Now it was his turn to lead the beautiful looking prominent crack, topped by a chimney-type recess. A solid 19 pitch, of the type much loved by traditional trad climbers.

Paul started climbing in his solid dependable unhurried way. As he inched up the prominent crack, I wondered how the opening party in 1981 would have protected themselves without my 'big Bertha', a number 4 Camelot I had purchased 18 months previously. The crack was too wide for anything that I had seen from those days. Paul said that maybe they had used a huge hex, and then a big 'bong'. Not having climbed in that era, I could see that there was quite a jargon attached to the variants of pitons.

Calls of "watch me" came down to my answers "I'm always watching you." I noticed the sewing machine legs. I also noticed the shadows lengthening as sunset approached. Then Paul was into the chimney, saying that the only way to get up this one is with your back against the wall. "This must be one of the most amazing climbing views in the whole of Blouberg" he said. "So the view" I thought, "just get on with it. We haven't got much daylight left." I may have actually used stronger language.

At the top of the chimney, I expected Paul to make a stance. Now, only the tops of the mountain and clouds were still in sunlight, with darkness slowly embracing the earth. Paul had asked if he could leave me with his rucksack, which would have only got in his way leading up the chimney. I already had my own bum bag. The last thing that I wanted to do was climb such a hard pitch in the dark hauling all the baggage. Nevertheless, we did have head torches this time; I didn't want the embarrassment of another special award at a Mountain Club Dinner for being brightened out on a rock face.

But Paul just carried on climbing, saying that there was a better stance not far ahead. For interminable minutes, the rope inched out. I became additionally worried that Paul and I would end up being out of earshot. At last came a far too distant call "Off belay" then "Climb when ready." There was just enough light. I flew up the prominent crack, screaming for a tight rope whenever there was any slack. The last thing I wanted was to fall, and then have to repeat hard won meters. On the way, I must have retrieved my trusty big Bertha.

On entering the chimney, in order to 'put my back against the wall', I must have turned my bum bag stomach-side and I must have slung Paul's rucksack below me. I can recall, wedged in the chimney, forcing myself to actually look at this amazing view. It was amazing, for the whole 2 seconds I allowed myself. It would have looked even better, I thought to myself, in the sodding sunlight.

When I got to Paul's belay stance in a solid tree, I silently and begrudgingly acknowledged it as being the right option. It was dark now. We had 2 long but easy pitches of 14 and 11 above us to the top. It was the first time I had climbed in the dark. Previously, I had regarded head torches as unnecessary equipment shown off by egocentric climbers. Now I acknowledged their full value.

We topped out at 9.15 pm. We had been 14 hours on the face. We were tired, dehydrated and hungry. But we were exhilarated from completing the near vertical 300 meter climb and very relieved at not having to spend a cold night bivvying out on the face.

A stop by the nearby pool of water to slake our thirst, and its brownish colour just didn't worry us. It was midnight by the time that we got back to the tent, 20 hours after Paul's alarm had raised us. All I wanted now was sleep. Paul insisted on tea. I must have been gone before the water boiled.

The hike back down the mountain the next day was long and hot. But the indigenous forest is always calm and peaceful, still with a sprinkling of towering majestic yellow woods.

As we neared Francis' kraal to collect the car, we passed an old man relaxing with his women and family. He greeted us, and said "Did the mountain give it what you wanted?"

International climbing meet 15th to 23rd March, 2003

Report by Ulrike Kiefer

This meet was a great success. We had 24 guest climbers from Britain (12), Belgium (7), Switzerland (2), Canada (1), India (1) and New Zealand (1). From within South Africa we had 29 bookings, 5 from Gauteng, 3 from Eastern Province, 2 from Stellenbosch, 1 from Hottentots and 18 from Cape Town, plus 1 "hut warden" from Gauteng.

Everybody was able to climb each day at different venues. Climbing parties went to Hell Fire, Karbonaartjies Kraal, Montagu, Kleinwinterhoek, Du Toit's Peak (Renaissance), Paarl, Muizenberg, Table Mountain and Milner. Due to the rather unstable weather few climbers attempted long country routes. We also had two kloofing trips, one to Riviersonderend and one to Elandspad. Both were very much enjoyed. The second weekend was unfortunately washed out by rain and no climbing was done.

We had two social evenings with slide shows at the Du Toit's Kloof Lodge, on Saturday and on the following Tuesday. The Saturday show gave an introduction to Western Cape crags; on Tuesday we saw slides of other African mountains and some European crags.

The braai on Friday night was much appreciated and the speed, by which the food disappeared, was proof of a very active week.

Despite the rather rainy weather everyone taking part enjoyed this week. South Africa impressed our guests and many said they would return for more climbing. Bonds were formed, addresses exchanged and some special days shared by like-minded people. I am sure, everyone went away a little richer. We are all looking forward to more meets of this kind.

5. MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome the following new members: Diana Foden, Henk Thiert, Chris Sherlock, Janice Wyndham-Quin, Julia van Biljon, Gregor Heidemann, Rochelle Oosthuizen, Stephen Johnson, Michael Garrard, Owen Sutton; and family members Amy & Timothy Watkins, Ryan Shackleton and Hayley Wulffers and accepted at the last committee meeting: David Ferreira, David Frank, Ron Nathan, Andrew Thornewell, Kristina Pukstys, John Comley, Benjamin Knights, Andrea van Meygaarden, Dirk Smith, Lara Hirschowitz, Tim Dunnett, Willem le Roux, Nanya Thiert (family membership).

Transfer from Stellenbosch: David Newton

Resigned: Ray Brincker, Ivan Hunter, Dawn Perkins, Rinus & Tineke de Kleijn

With regret we advise the passing away of Geoff Sutton of Mountain Sanctuary Park. Our sincere condolences to Mrs Sutton, Owen and family

With sadness we advise the tragic death of Peter Kroll, who lost his life in a housebreaking incident. Our condolences to his family and friends.

Richard Jans passed away last year.

Family membership: to remind members that we have this category of membership for your children under the age of 13 years. An application form needs to be completed and two photos of the child are required. The annual fee is R15 and this entitles the child to accompany the parent and may take one person in their age group without having to obtain a permit. After the age of 13 years, junior membership would apply.

Social News: Congratulations to Horst Weiss who recently celebrated his 90th birthday.

Our congratulations to Romey and Thomas Provini on their marriage. They have re-located to Switzerland. They send greetings to us. Also to Caitlin Dimock and Günther Bargon, Jen MacPhail to John Cummings, and Rosemary Parr to Jaco Moolman congratulations on your marriages

Veterans Meet: We invite all veterans to join us to a meet at Easterkloof on Sunday 20 July. As places are limited booking is essential. Lifts can be arranged.

Membership of 50 years and longer: On the 30 July there will be a presentation of certificates to members of 50 years and longer membership. We are also planning a slide show of 'days gone by'. Please join us for this special occasion

6. CLUB NEWS

Weekend at Hamerkop House Our meet will be held the weekend 7 & 8 June. If you wish to stay in the house please book with Andries 082 928 9694. Fees payable.

Library: Members please return any books you borrowed from the club library asap. We are also trying to locate the member who borrowed the map of Malawi. PLEASE return the map.

Invitation: We have been invited by the Johannesburg Hiking Club to join them for their Winter Camp at Foothold on 21 and 22 June 2003. For further information and to book please contact Uschi. This should be a very pleasant weekend.

Camp Fire and Family Meet: This special occasion will be held on 4 & 5 October at Cedarberg.

First Aid Course: Members who are interested in taking part in a Level 1 First Aid Course, please contact Uschi. Tentative dates are Option 1: 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, & 21 June evaluation; Option 2: 30 June, July 1, 3, 7, 8, 12 (evaluation). Cost R380 plus R60 for certificate. The section will contribute half for meet-leaders and trainers.

Week Day 'Meets': if you are interested in forming a group to go out on a weekday, please contact Margaret Hammond-Tooke 011 888 3883 or Erik Manson 011 646 2538.

Annual July Camp: Kwa Zulu Natal Section advise that this year's camp will be held at Giants Castle from 5 July to 19 July. Application forms from Uschi.

Subs for 2003: thank you to members who have paid. To the ones who have not paid - PLEASE do so asap. We wish to thank members who have made donations to our various funds.

2001 Journals: if you have not received yours, please contact Uschi. The balance not collected at the clubhouse were posted but a number of these were returned 'unclaimed' etc. The following members journals were returned: Rod Allport, Jenny MacPhail, Tarquin Holt, Nicholas Drake, Ivan Battison, Dave Rogers., Paul Venter etc. Please contact Uschi to make arrangements to collect. Some journals from previous years were also returned over the last period. If you do not have certain years please also contact the office to check whether yours were also returned after they were posted.

We have a number of Journals from previous years. If any member is interested to obtain some back copies please contact office

Thank you to Dylan Morgan for the donation of some fine mountaineering books.

Are you a member of the Magaliesberg Protection Association (MPA)? This association works tirelessly to ensure that the proclaimed "protected natural environment area" of the Magaliesberg range remains so. Its integrity is continually under threat.

As a recent volunteer, helping on the clerical side of things, I posted a newsletter last month to all MPA members. A total of 208 members were on the list. Of these many were environmental organizations and local landowners. I was concerned to note so few Mountain Club members (both Magaliesberg and Johannesburg Section). We have over 800 members of the Johannesburg Section alone, and I felt embarrassed at our representation, as it is the above two Sections that enjoy the Magaliesberg all year round.

Please support this crucial guardianship of our mountains. For only R50 a year you can become a member. Please read the MPA brochure that is enclosed with this Newsletter. *Margaret Hammond-Tooke*

General:

First aid course: We are offering another First Aid Course Level 1 by Africa Nature Training

(ANT) The fee is R380 plus R60 for the certificate. The section will contribute towards the cost of this course for trainers and meet-leaders. Here are the dates:

Option 1: 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 June (18h15 - 21h15) Sat 21 Evaluation 30 mins (you can book a timeslot for this)

Option 2: 30 June, 1, 3, 7, 8 July (18h15 - 21h15)

Sat 12 Evaluation 30 mins (you can book a timeslot for this)

Venue 1 Mowbray Rd, Greenside

If you are interested please contact Uschi as soon as possible: email or 011 807 1310 am weekdays

Everest Golden Jubilee - 29 May 1953 /29 May 2003: 'Even the mediocre can have adventures and even the fearful can achieve. In a sense fear became a friend - I hated it at the time but it added spice to the challenge and satisfaction to the conquest. I envied those who in success clung to a measure of peace and tranquillity - I was always too restless and life was a constant battle against boredom. But the compensations have been great, certainly more than I deserve. I have had the world lie beneath my clumsy boots and seen the red sun slip over the horizon after the dark Antarctic winter. I have had more than my share of excitement, beauty, laughter and friendship.' *Sir Edmund Hillary*

"Conquest of Everest": the original 1953 documentary on Hillary and Tenzing's successful first ascent, will be shown at the club on Wednesday the 28th May 2003

Bigfoot in the Magaliesberg? This message was received from Andrew Porter: *I found a pair of unattended climbing shoes at the base of the climb "Difficult Shapes and Passive Rhythms" in Cedarberg Kloof on Saturday 29th March. They are very large. If you left/lost yours, please describe them to Andrew.*

Climbers needed to work with children and youth: We are looking into starting a club for children in the JHB area where they will sign up for a period of time to climb on a regular basis, to receive training and instruction in climbing safety and techniques, and to be exposed to various aspects of climbing. This club will promote climbing as a sport, ensure that young climbers learn safe practices and good technique, and promote the MCSA to young people.

If this gets off the ground, we will need to have a "pool" of climbers to supervise, coach and train these young people. Suitable climbing experience and knowledge will be important, and the commitment would involve one evening per fortnight or per month (depending on numbers of helpers), one Sunday a month, and one long weekend per year.

If you are interested in helping in some way, please contact Brett Nicolson (Youth and Development Portfolio on the MCSA JHB committee) on 082 922 7802, or email him at brettnic@xsinet.co.za.

Famous last words?: While chatting to Rob Thomas, MCSA SAR National Rescue Co-ordinator, we started to talk about the famous one-liners that have been quoted after a rescue.

Some of Rob's personal favourites:

- 1.No water bottle, no snacks, no problem!
- 2.I don't tie knots in abseil ropes
- 3.Leave the map & compass, take the GPS
- 4.Skip the helmet - I've got a hard head!

"Support search & rescue...Get Lost!"

But we'd like to hear from you... Please email your favourite quotes / unquotes to us at MCSA Jhb. The top ten contributions will be published on the web, and used for future MCSA SAR publications. email address: terryw@iafrica.com

NEED REPAIRS?

Industrial sewing repairs and manufacture done to all outdoor equipment.

Contact Adrian van Lieshout: 083 229 5910 (a/h), 783 9200 (o/h)