



September 2004

## 1. FROM THE EDITOR

Finally, winter has come to an end and members are looking forward to frolicking, rather than shivering in the shaded kloofs. Things were not all bad this winter, as members enjoyed some good ice climbing in the berg, thanks to well organised meets by Lofty. And some even managed to injure themselves on the ski slopes. Members also enjoyed a wonderful trip to Peru, much thanks to Greg Divine for excellent organisation. While other members have discovered, that the best way to make sure a girl says 'yes', when you ask her to marry you, is on a cliff edge. This edition features an article on some of the hard work done by the KZN section in bolting some easier rock in Harrismith. A concept which should be well received by some of the more gravity challenged members of the club. We hope that this spirit will extend itself to some of the other sport crags in our region.

*Peter Adrian*

## 2. LAND AND ACCESS

There have been a few new developments on the land and access scene, in particular at Castle Gorge. The committee seems to spend a significant amount of their time dealing with land and access problems. Although many of these are the result of non-members violating our land and access agreements, and unfortunately, causing us to lose our access to certain areas, there have recently been a few incidents where members themselves have brought the club into disrepute. Since our enjoyment of the mountains depends so much on good relationships with private land owners, we must continue to strive towards respect and consideration for the land owners, as being an important ethos of the club.

**Mountain Sanctuary park.** There was a recent incident where club members were reprimanded for making excessive noise, 'rally driving' up the access road through Mountain Sanctuary Park. This is a nature reserve, on private land, where the speed limit is 35km/h. This kind of incident is extremely embarrassing for the MCSA, and disciplinary action has been taken against these members. Members are also reminded to stick to the servitude that runs from the parking lot at MSP to the MCSA Cedarberg Kloof. The parking fee is not an entrance fee to MSP, and so any deviations off the standard access route constitutes trespassing.

**Poaching in the kloofs.** Several members have noted, that in recent years, the number of sightings of klipspringer in the Tonquani area of the Magaliesberg has decreased, and that these animals have become very people shy. There have been reports of snares found, and a group of young men with sticks and dogs moving through the area, presumably hunting. Members are asked to keep a look out for snares, and report poaching activity. We hope that the implementation of the Damhoek conservancy may enable us to pool resources in order to address these conservation issues.

**Bronkies Sport Crag.** There have been some reports of non-members free-loading on the access to Bronkies sport crag, that we as MCSA members have worked hard to obtain. According to our access agreement with the owner, non-members are not permitted to climb there (scout groups excluded).

MCSA members are asked to carry their club cards on them and to please check for membership cards from people they do not recognise. Non-members may be kindly asked to leave the crag and directed to the MCSA website ([www.mcsa.org.za](http://www.mcsa.org.za)) for information on joining the club.

As in the Magaliesberg, the "one member, one guest" rule applies when visiting Bronkies and as it is us as members who are responsible to maintain our access to the crag, lets do our best not lose it. Updated RD's are available from Lofty at [frostg1@telkom.co.za](mailto:frostg1@telkom.co.za) and please let him know of any incidents regarding access.

**Castle Gorge Parking Area.** The existing electric fence around Winter's Way, including the Castle Gorge parking area, has to be taken down because it is being replaced with an electric fence around the southern boundary of the Damhoek Conservancy. The MCSA Gauteng General Committees and the Johannesburg Hiking Club Committee are in urgent discussions with Gavin Amos to agree on suitable alternative arrangements.

In the meantime the cars of members and their guests will unfortunately be at risk at the existing parking area because the gate to the parking area has already been taken down.

Uschi can be contacted for the code number at Castle Gorge.

**Kranskloof.** Change of phone no. Contact Uschi for new contact number when wishing to visit Kranskloof. Remember parking of R20 per car and R2 pp per day – payable to Uschi. She sends it to Mrs vd Westhuizen.

If you are not sure/don't know the land and access arrangements for an area, please contact Andries Lategan or Uschi.

## 3. SOCIAL CLIMBING

*After nearly being lynched by an angry mob of MMBB (Much Maligned Belay Bunnies), intent on beating the identity of the anonymous columnist out of me. I am pleased that I have managed to convince several of them to vent their frustrations by putting pen to paper. Two of these responses appear below.*

**3a. Dear Mr Anony-mouse,**

It seems that you have had some experience "climbing with chicks": I detect a note of bitterness. I commend your investment in the 4-year belay bunny relationship but there seems to have been something lacking (from what you say, it wasn't the gear). Take a hint from Men's Health or Cosmo – she's into the friendship more than the latest gear or assault on a peak.

My fellow "bunnies" have climbed huge South American peaks, traversed the Berg, done some awesome climbs and continue to get out there. We're not all into shopping and spa's. May I tender you a few comments I have heard and you can do some eve's dropping in return:

- He took me up Grey's Pass to introduce me to the Berg
- I couldn't do stairs for 3 days afterwards
- We raced in and climbed everything in sight
- Macdonald's for lunch in the Kloofs is not lunch!
- We walked 10km up hill without stopping for a break – he just wanted to get there
- Pasta and sauce every day for a week – yuck

However, each one of these "bunnies" is still climbing. Because she loves the climb, she thinks mountains are cool and she has an AWESOME guy next to her to share the experience.

From one bunny who met her tea-drinking mouse in the kloofs, and is still hiking and climbing and loves visiting the 5,000,000 star hotels,

*A Mrs Anonymous*

**3b.** There are 2 questions that beg to be asked:

- 1) Why are there so many single guys in the mountain club?
- 2) Why are there so few women in the mountain club?

I propose the answers are intrinsically linked. It all has to do with basic physiology and biochemistry. Don't fool yourself, we are not the same. Thank God!! Obviously there are always exceptions, but on average men are stronger, more focused, less compromising, more violent, less nurturing.

It was one of those necessary, natural, evolutionary things. So what does this all have to do with the above questions. Simple, because men are continually struggling with their testosterone induced need to conquer and dominate, mountain climbing is an obvious outlet. (Other testosterone induced behaviour is considered antisocial and needs to be discouraged).

Mountain climbing needs focus, strength, and the burning desire to climb over the damn mountain instead of walking around it. Women on the other hand do not have this need. The only thing we have a need to climb over is the fallen shopper at the Preview shoe sale. This is not to say women aren't capable, lack strength or ambition, it's just that we don't have to continually prove it.

I think now is the appropriate time to offer some advice to all the single guys out there. You are unlikely to find a partner at the top of a mountain, so stop looking there!

The women who are climbing are either there because they have been dragged up by their enthusiastic partners (likely with loads of swearing and cursing) or they are there because they really enjoy it, are good at it and are not interested in pursuing a relationship with the rest of you.

Go, enjoy the climb, leave the women behind to go shopping. Perhaps make some time to visit other venues i.e. shops, coffee shops, friends with good looking female friends. When you actually find someone, allow them to enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings with you, but it is not necessary to drag them up to the top. The view can be appreciated just as well from the bottom. Belaying is not that bad so long as you control the picnic basket.

*Female and proud of it.*

Footnote: the views expressed in this article are solely those of the writer and do not reflect the opinions of the female gender as a whole.

#### *4. CLIMBING IN THE DRAKENSBURG WITH ROBIN*

*By Ted Scholes*

Robin Forsyth passed away on August 6, 2004 at the age of 89 years old. He was an active and popular member of the MCSA for more than 57 years. When I joined the club in 1948 he was a member and had already climbed the Drakensberg.

During December 1948, I joined Robin in the Cathedral Peak Hotel and with a small party we climbed The Bell. Our original intention was also to climb The Column, but because Robin had to return to work, I stayed on and was able to do this ascent with a party organised by Toobie Louw. I remember that it was so wet that I climbed the first two grassy pitches bare footed.

During the Easter holidays the following year, Robin and I decided to visit The Giants Castle Game Reserve. This reserve had been established mainly to protect the diminishing number of eland in the Drakensberg area, as well as for trout fishing in the Bushman's River, which has its source in the reserve.

Our party consisted of Robin, Joan Knox, George Burrows and me. Having slept on the roadside on Thursday night, we reached the reserves headquarters by mid-morning on Friday. The only accommodation was a large cave and two four bedded cabins for fishermen. The warder Mr Thrash, lived with his wife and family in the original farmhouse. In addition to his normal duties, Mr Thrash kept a pack of wolfhounds, with which numerous jackals were hunted, and which were also used to curb the activities of poachers.

Mr Thrash told us that the summit of Giants Castle (3314 metres) could be quite easily reached from the Basutoland (Lesotho) side, however to get there from the reserve involved going on a long and tiring scramble up the Langalibalele Pass. He was not aware of any direct route from the reserve to the summit, because of the long line of cliffs that are formidable to any ascent. He pointed out to us however that these cliffs were broken at one place by a long narrow cleft, which we could investigate as a possible climbing route. We camped not far from the bottom end of this cleft. The next day we discovered that the cleft could be entered by a short face climb on clean Drakensberg Basalt rock, followed by a succession of chimneys and a scramble which finished at the summit point. We found an easy descent to the gully on the far side of the peak, which enabled us to return to camp directly. This enabled us to avoid the long walk off the summit via the Langalibalele Pass. That concluded a very pleasant and satisfactory day's climbing.

In December of that same year (1949) Robin and I returned to the Giants Castle Game Reserve to join a party from Natal organised by Des Watkins, which had been arranged to explore the Injasati Valley and its peaks. After a full day's trek we reached the upper Injasati cave which became our base camp. On the way we passed the magnificent "Paintings Cave", at that stage it was open to view, nowadays it is closed with a strong fence. A party consisting of Des Watkins, Lorna Pierson, Robin and I succeeded in making the first ascent of the eastern Injasati Triplet. This was after spending a wet night at the foot of the rock. Details of this trip to the Injasati are recorded in my article in the 1951 MCSA journal.

Robin Forsyth was the best man at my wedding in 1952, when I married Mavis Bartlett. A few years later Robin and Marian married after they had climbed Mount Kenya together, and thereafter they continued to make adventurous trips. Their home in Abbotsford was a venue for many meetings, before the club

chose its present club house. Robin was Treasurer of the Transvaal section for 25 years and in 1982 was awarded the gold Badge of the MCSA for his services and life long support.

## **5. MCSA AWARDS**

Members might not be aware that the Awards system of the Club had recently changed. The following awards can be made to members:

- 1) Gold Badge for significantly furthering the cause of mountaineering and the objects of the Club in several aspects over a significant period of time.
- 2) Mountain Award for significant achievement in mountaineering and/or rock climbing, whether over an extended period of time or for a single outstanding achievement.
- 3) President's Award for rendering exceptional service to the Club over an extended period of time and/or having made an exceptional contribution in a specific field of the Club activities.

Life membership of the Club is granted to any such mentioned Award recipients.

The award procedure goes something like this: Any member can motivate an award (in writing). This is then taken to the committee who decide whether the nomination is warranted. The committee appoints a little group to do an evaluation - there are criteria etc. If positive, a proper motivation and evaluation is forwarded to Central Committee. This is then once again looked at, and sent to the Chairmen of the various sections, who then let their committees decide whether they agree with the nomination and relevant award. Cencom then decides, and lets the section know. All this is done confidentially, even at committee level, as one feels that if the nomination is not successful, the person concerned could be upset. There are differences of opinion.

We are also looking at section awards in these areas and hopefully that will come about in the near future. The JHB section used to have the "Disa" award, but went about this without Cencom approval for the design. The Disa was discontinued, I think, because it looked too much like the Gold Badge. (I'm not sure whether Cencom needs to give approval for section awards.) Last year this came up again and Greg Devine thought "Chairman's Award" would be a start but never got any further. Magaliesberg section has theirs as the "Peglerae". All pretty involved but I think that's how it works.

Questions or nominations regarding awards can be sent to [Uschi Magg Jhbmail-admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za](mailto:Uschi Magg Jhbmail-admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za).

## **6. BOLTING**

**Mt Everest, Harrismith.** The KZN section of the MCSA has begun a bolting project with a difference.

A survey of the Everest route guide shows that out of a total of about 120 single pitch routes, there are only 8 at grade 15 and under. Of these, one is merely an access pitch and three are seriously under graded thus leaving only 4 one-pitch routes at grade 15 and under. This is not an inspiring selection for beginners, geriatrics or enthusiastic climbers of excessively modest ability - of whom there are a fair number floating around.

The problem is similar at many climbing venues and the reason is fairly obvious: Most bolters are fairly experienced climbers who are climbing the harder grades. Since bolting involves a great deal of time, hard work and money these bolters will tend to bolt routes at the higher end of their personal climbing ability and are unlikely to spend time, effort and money on bolting routes that they could just about walk up in their sleep. Hence the dearth of easy bolted lines for beginners.

In an attempt to remedy this problem the members of the MCSA-KZN Section have located and bolted ten easy lines at Mt Everest Resort, thus increasing the number of routes in the '15 and under' category from 4 to 14. Details of the new routes appear in the "New Routes Book" at the reception and will appear on the MCSA-KZN Web page in the near future.

It is hoped that other Sections of the MCSA that operate within striking distance of Mt Everest Resort will accept the challenge of the KZN Section to make further contributions to this worthwhile project.

## **7. PERU 2004 NATIONAL EXPEDITION**

In the 1991 Journal Andre Schoon wrote: "The esoteric delights of organising a small mountaineering expedition assume a different guise when small becomes large. If in the end forty Bolivia '91 participants taxed the reserves of faith, there can only be relief the other hundred didn't come!"

It is perhaps just as well that my attention was only drawn to this sentence after sixty-two persons, mostly members, confirmed that they would indeed be participating in the Peru 2004 National Meet. By then it was really too late to limit numbers, an unnecessary measure in the event as numbers never proved to be a problem.

We had initially booked forty seats on the plane but soon had to expand that to fifty. A further three people came from the US, five from the UK and four made their own way there. Jenny Paterson proved invaluable in arranging our flights and insurance cover. With a large bus arranged to meet us at the airport and sixty beds booked in Huaraz, we were all set.

I had decided that we should all do the five day Santa Cruz trek first, in order to orientate ourselves in the Cordillera Blanca, to acclimatise and to get to know one another. With two buses and a truck for the luggage, we set out for Cashapampa, the start of the trail. We were met by our donkey drivers with a herd of burros to carry our baggage. With Jim Head's fluent Spanish, communication was no problem and the portaging went without a hitch.

The trail is as beautiful as it is reputed to be. We spent our extra day walking up to Alpamayo base-camp, before tackling the Punta Union Pass at 4750 metres. We were finally met by the buses at Vacqueria and taken back over the spectacular Portachuello Pass to Huaraz for a rest and a few decent meals.

Thereafter the main group went to Ishinca for a week of training and easy peaks, two climbers attempted Alpamayo and a small group trekked around the Huayhuash. Later still a group arranged formal training with Peruvian guides while eleven people attempted Copa (6122 m). A lot of minor peaks were climbed and many people gained high-mountain experience for the first time. The height record was set by Paul Fatti and Art McGarr on Huascaran North.

Many went to Cuzco for the Inca ruins, some went to Iquitos to visit the Amazon jungle while a bunch of die-hards climbed on. A few brave souls even visited Lima, revelling in the museums and cathedrals. While some felt a bit more climbing could have been done, I think it was a very successful expedition. The only remaining questions are, where to next, and when?

*Greg Devine*

*Leader*

## **8. FIRE POLICY**

As absentee land owners, we still have a responsibility for the control of veld fires, as these can have a serious impact on our neighbours. Attached is an update of the fire control policy and contact details of the Rietfontein, Grootfontein, Kromriver, Buffelsfontein Rural Authority Association (RGKB).

### **RGKB FIRE POLICY JUNE 2004: REPORTING AND CONTROLLING FIRES**

This information has been given over the years, but is particularly relevant to new comers to the area. Please do not file or throw this away. Display it prominently, preferably near the telephone, and make sure that everyone in the house knows how to apply it.

A landowner is not always aware that there is a fire on their property- often somebody from further away can see smoke, flames or a glow at night. It is your responsibility to ensure that somebody knows about a fire, regardless of whether others know or not. Rather too many reports than none. If you know on whose property it is, contact them - use the map of properties with farm numbers, and the communications network list. If you cannot contact them yourself, let one of the following people know:

**GUY EDMUNDS (014) 535-0017**

**DEREK BAUM(014) 535-0000**

**DAAN MEYER(014) 534-00730827038253**

Particularly for the Buffelsfontein Grootfontein area.

**BILL KING(014) 534-0113**

**DON LAKEW(014) 534-0065**

**JOAN VON MALTITZ (014) 535-0022 0823535754** can help you with communications, i.e. if you cannot identify the owner or reach the above people, or keeping contact with others you are at a fire.

**Spotters.** These are people who are situated in positions most favourable for seeing fires, and are particularly responsible for reporting fires. Confirm your sightings with them if you are unsure of the locality of a fire. They are not expected to come and fight fires for you.

Guy Edmonds (014) 535-0017, Joan von Maltitz (014) 535-0022 or 0823535754, Johan van Niekerk(014) 535-0042, Louvain van Velden (014) 535-0029, Don Lake (014) 5340065, Hislop (014) 534-0393, Mark Barlow (014) 5743977, Hilma Fritz (014) 534-0051, Jaques Cilliers (014) 534-0063.

All fires must be reported to Guy so that he can enter them on a fire record list. Information needed is: Duration of the fire i.e. when it started to when it is completely out. Location of the fire i.e. property/ ies number/ s of where it started and where it spread. People involved in controlling it. Probable cause of the fire.

#### **Fire control**

You have chosen to buy, hire or live on property in an area that is prone to veld fires, and must therefore accept the responsibilities that come with it. Protecting your property is your responsibility, whether you are absent landowner or not. If you need help ask your neighbours first as they are most involved. Contact one of the people above to give you advice, but don't expect them to come and do the work for you.

In previous years landowners have sat and watched TV while others have worked on their ground to prevent their own properties from being burnt. If you are not there, your workers or tenants should know what to do and equipment should be available. They should also be asked to actively help neighbours when there is a fire in their vicinity.

Not every fire must be "killed", but every fire must be monitored i.e. watched to ensure that it does not endanger other properties.

If there are adequate fire breaks it should not be necessary to fight the fire if it is unlikely to go further and cause damage, but you must be on the alert to check that it does not jump a break or otherwise get out of control. At night with strong winds, anything can happen. Most fires do tend to occur on icy windy nights, particularly over weekends when labour is not available. Powerful torches are necessary, dress warmly, and take a supply of drinking water, in addition to extra water used for fires.

Everybody should have adequate equipment for fire control, and it should be stored where it can be collected in a hurry even if you are not there. Check that water tanks or reservoirs are kept full and hoses are in place. Consider having more hose connection points in vulnerable areas. If you have thatch roofs you must take extra care as flying burning leaves travel a very long way. Neighbours cannot be expected to be at your house protecting your roof when there are other urgent points needing attention.

You must know how to use your equipment, e.g. a water spray from a backpack sprayer has a "push-pull" type of lance. The Matabi sprayer is expensive, but is probably the most reliable available. If you are not a **RGKB** member don't expect their equipment to be used on your behalf.

If there is the slightest chance that your vehicle could be in danger of being in the fire, do not lock it and take the keys with you. Where possible, park on ground already burnt. If your battery can stand emergency lights left on, do so, as it is very dark at night when the fire is out.

## **9. MDT ANNOUNCEMENT**

The South African Mountaineering Development & Training Trust (MDT), is updating its database of all candidates who have been registered with the various schemes since 1994. Many changes have occurred in the MDT, and in order to properly attend to the needs of all stakeholders in the industry, it is important that the MDT has up to date contact details.

If you were ever registered with the MDT, and or ever underwent a training or assessment through the MDT schemes, please contact the administrator. Please give your current email address or postal address and an update form will be sent to you. Alternately you can download a update form from the MDT website. Current information about the MDT can be viewed at [www.mdt.za.org](http://www.mdt.za.org).

South African Mountaineering Development & Training Trust

Andrew Friedemann – Administrator National Management Committee

P.O.Box 662,

Gillitts, 3603

[admin@mdt.za.org](mailto:admin@mdt.za.org)

083 768 9021

#### **10. MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

**New members:** Welcome to new members: George Beining, Anina Kruger, Brendon Hutchinson, Gary Cundill, Russell Shaw, and James Glanville, and family members Kirsten Cundill, Callum Fraser, Oona Fraser, Chiara du Plessis, Falcon Sanders.

**Robin Forsyth:** Our sincere condolences to Marian and family on the passing on of Robin at the age of 89. Robin joined our section in 1946. For many years he was the section's treasurer, used to import climbing gear especially ropes, karabiners and slings for members because all those years ago there was no local supplier. He was an active climber. In 1982 Robin was awarded the Gold Badge of the Mountain Club of SA in recognition of his service to the cause of mountaineering in South Africa over the past 35 years. 'His outstanding work over the same period as Honorary Treasurer and committee member of the Transvaal Section and ever energetic interest and participation in the various activities of the Club.'

Robin will be remembered with fondness.

The MCSA (Jhb Section) and the Rescue Team would like to convey their deep sympathy and condolences to the Carr family and to the Four Wheel Drive Club of South Africa. Clive Carr died during a training exercise in Blouberg in July. Clive was a member of the Off Road Rescue Unit and was actively involved in rescue for the last few years.

**Birthdays:** Congratulations to Harry Barker on his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, Horst Weiss on his 91<sup>st</sup> and Martin Knoetze on his 80<sup>th</sup>.

**Engagements:** Peter Adrian, to Dr. Silvana Maraschin, and Peter Holdt, to Dr. Donatela Belbello.

#### **11. CLUB NEWS**

**New times of club evenings starting at 19h30.** As from October we shall be starting our club evenings at 19h30, instead of 20h00, and wish to start the slide shows just after 20h00. This is for a trial period and we would like members to give their comments on the earlier start time.

**Touching the void.** Starts on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August at selected Cinema's.

**Fun evening on 24 November:** We are having an end of the year bash with a difference. The evening will start with a Bring & Braai, followed by a potpourri of members slides. We ask all members to bring a few of their slides to show at this evening. They don't have to be top climbs or extraordinary expeditions – just of our members and their activities. We will also be having a raffle (raffling off the engaged peoples climbing gear? Ed.), maybe even music.

**Subs outstanding:** Those members who have not paid their subs for 2004 have been sent reminders. Please let us know whether you wish to remain members. At the end of August those who have not made contact with us will be removed from our membership.

**First Aid dumps:** The Search & Rescue convenors will be updating the first aid dumps. Meet leaders will be asked to help re-stock/replace the dumps.

**Johannesburg Hiking Club:** There will be a joint meet with the Johannesburg Hiking Club at Cedarberg kloof, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. We welcome Jean Williams as the new administrator of the JHB hiking club. Tel: No 011 462 2993 weekdays 8h30–12h30.

**Dates of committee meetings:** 13 September, 25 October, 6 December.

#### **12. FOR SALE**

**Route books:** Magaliesberg, Craggs of Gauteng, The Restaurant.

**Badges:** MCSA cloth badges, Silver badges.

**MCSA Ties.**

**MCSA shirts for sale:** 100% cotton bush shirts with an embroidered MCSA logo on for R120 each. Sizes (quite a large cut: measurements underarm to underarm on shirt laid out flat provided):

- Small (58cm). Colour: sand with brown/blue on pockets and shoulders
- Medium (60cm). Colour: sand and forest green on pockets and shoulders

Available at Club evenings (Wednesdays) or phone Uschi 011 807-1310 on weekday mornings.

**MCSA expedition kit bags:** A few are still available at R390 (R35 extra for postage). This will be the last lot ordered, so if you want one, order now. They can be viewed at the club evening. Contact: Ulrike, 011 907-7438 or Uschi, 011 807-1310.