



May 2007

1. EDITORIAL

This has been a rather interesting quarter for me. Whilst I didn't get too much hiking or climbing done, a lot of other things have happened. For starters, being meet leader for the Krantzberg meet was just enough to hold sway, to convince my rather pregnant wife, that it was my duty to the club, to go on my last weekend mountaineering trip before the birth of our first anarchist. This was an awesome meet, the breathtaking untouched beauty, solitude, and warm campfire nights with good friends, all the things that make Krantzberg a special place. I am always amazed at how every time I go there, the mountain seems to get bigger and bigger, and my body feels more shattered, and abused, after each successive trip. You would think it gets easier with experience, but not! Let the mediocre grades of most of the routes not lull you into confidence, as even the easiest route, can be a serious undertaking, and requires a significant dollop of big match temperament. The number of times you find yourself on the face, you think you are off route, the gear is dodgy, the rock unstable under your feet, and you are surrounded by overhangs and eerie blank faces. There is no comfort, in any direction you look, you are stuck. That sick feeling begins to sink into your stomach. You peer down below at the cars, the campsite, the beers in the cooler box, your warm sleeping bag, and you long for them, you keep asking yourself, what am I doing up here, and you crave for that desperate feeling to go away, and be replaced by something sure, something safe, and something comfortable. You know you can't be lowered off, you have to keep on going. You stare at your options again and again. The blank face, the evil overhang, or the polished open book, none of which look like they will swallow so much as a micro-nut, or size 000 friend. A small group of vultures start circling a little closer around you, and you wonder whether they know something you don't, and you wish for wings to be able to fly off, and glide down to safety. Then you see it, on the face: left foot on that edge, pressure off the little ridge, reach for the crimper, right foot up, and lunge for the ledge and safety. It might just work. You chalk up, you look again, carefully measuring the distance between the holds, making sure the big old mountain is not trying to fool you by its awesome size. You breath in, and exhale deeply, more chalk, more breathing... and you go for it, leaving the safety of the jug and foothold. Like clockwork, you follow the mechanical sequence you planned in your head, you feel the warmth in your heart as your hands latch onto the big ledge above and drag yourself up. Gasping, you look around for hope. Miraculously, like Jacobs ladder, the most magnificent crack line towers above you, declaring the ecstasy that will lead you to the top. You look down at the flat world below, and realise that at that moment, you wouldn't swap that feeling for anything else in the world. That's Krantzberg, and I love it.

Other interesting things this quarter, are a couple of changes on the committee. Firstly, we have a new chairman, Chris Ziraneke, who has promised action. Since I keep bumping into him at the crags, I can at least say that he is out there, and doing stuff, and not only that, is probably the first chairman to deliver an article (on climbing!) for the newsletter on debut. We also welcome Peter Lazarus to the legal portfolio, and Vanessa Mayman to public relations. The JHB section hosted the first trad-challenge, a weekend of unbolted bliss, at Cedarberg/Tonquani, for real climbers, on real rock. This quarter promises to be even more exciting. To keep us amused during the cold winter nights, we will host the first ever MCSA club Cookathon: BBC food eat your heart out, as the MCSA's greatest chefs battle it out with MSR stoves to see who will be king the gourmet mountain. And if the popularity of the family meet was anything to go by, we will also be running the first ever "babies in the bush" evening, for parents and tots to share their secrets and experience, on how to successfully introduce your offspring to the mountains, from a very early age. Perfect timing, as yours truly is now the proud father of little Clara Edda Adrian (born 15 May), and our esteemed treasurer Dave Jewel and wife Zoe celebrated the birth of Timothy Bryce Jewel on the 24 May. And finally, so that you don't think we are all going soft, we have decided to do something really hardcore, and for the first time ever, an MCSA section will host South Africa's most talented climbers, to pit themselves against Gauteng's hardest sport climbs. And finally, you guys have outdone yourselves this quarter, with some awesome contributions! Thank you! Thank you!

Peter Adrian

2. MPONJWANA (3117M), DRAKENSBERG

It was twenty to three in the afternoon and Chris and I were looking up a grass gully wondering if it was 'the obvious grass gully immediately round the corner' from the 60m traverse on mixed grass and rock, 2 pitches from the top. 3pm was our pre-set cut off time. We were weighing up the options; advance to the summit and risk a very cold night out or the disappointing safety of backing off.

Mponjwana is a magnificent freestanding peak, separated by a deep gully from the escarpment, and at the north end of the Rockeries. Situated in the Mweni area of the Natal Drakensberg, it has grand views of the Eastern Butress and Devils Tooth of the Royal Natal National Park to the north, and the Bell and Cathedral Peak to the south.

We had hiked up the escarpment with the meet into the area organised by Rance and Andrew over the long weekend. It was a good crowd of about 20. We had taken 2 days to get from the Tourist Centre up to Mponj Cave. I was somewhat reluctant to join the trip as the weather forecast suggested a possible family of cold fronts blowing up from Cape Town. Both my last 2 'Berg trips had been rained out. But this time there were mostly clear blue skies, though the nights were quite cold.

Mponj Cave (2935m) is really ideally placed, actually overlooking the peak's southern face. It is a comfortable overhang, shielded from most of the wind. Being NE facing, it catches the sun for most of the day, and can get quite warm, even in mid winter. Fortunately it was unoccupied when we arrived. That night it blew like hell in the exposed areas; the temperature dropped to well below zero, and even the swirling mist froze to form a light dusting of snow pellets.

So when we woke up to sun and clear skies on 'the day', there was some reluctance to leave our warm sleeping bags. We eventually levered ourselves away by about 8am. I had Duncan Souchon's book, Serpent Spires, which gave a short but adequate route description. Nevertheless, we lost ½ hour finding the cairn about 200m E of the cave, which marked the easiest access to the decent gully. Then it was pretty easy scrambling down the 150m or so, through the 'worm hole' to the start of the climb at the base of some water worn gullies.

Under the circumstances, we proposed to take the easiest (and hopefully the fastest) route to the top, following Thomsen and Snelson's original route first climbed in 1946. There are 6 formal pitches on the climb, the hardest graded at F1, with significant sections of scrambling. But it is the length of the climb (about 300m) and the route finding that are the challenge.

Chris took the first lead. We soon found the rock and the gear to be bitterly cold. Getting to the top of a pitch, one's hands were numb but one's feet were toasty. However, after belaying the leader for a pitch, the reverse was so, as one's feet froze but one's hands had the hot flushes. So the leader of the first pitch was destined to lead all the pitches that morning, at least till it warmed up.

We progressed well clearing the depths of the gully. Coming within sight of the cave, we found we had quite an audience, as the hikers had slogged up from their campsite below to check us out. After a couple of 'misinterpretations' of our route description, we arrived at the 'obvious grass gully', 2 pitches from the top.

What swung our decision to go on, was that some kind soul had bolted rap chains for the descent. It would make our retreat so much faster, safer and more manageable than abbing off the bundles of very dubious looking tat, even if we backed them up with more cord.

So, it was up the grass gully, then to the grassy face to the right which was a bit scary as it was only graded D but totally unprotected and quite exposed. Scramble on to the base of Thomsen's chimney, (10m, F1). Up and a final scramble to the summit. I heard this ecstatic whoop of delight as Chris lead to the top, shortly followed by mine. It was Chris's first 'Berg peak, and only my second. It was a very good feeling. There is always something very mentally cleansing about a Drakensberg experience. And so we safely abbed off, thankfully getting back to the cave, ½ hour after dark.

Writers note:

I write of this recent trip:

1.To demonstrate that your new chairman is not glued to his chair, but is still getting out there (not that my predecessors were inactive).

2.To encourage others to attempt our local adventure peaks.

3. NEWS FROM EVEREST

There are a lot of South Africans on Mt Everest this year. Firstly, I would like to extend my congratulations to 3 South Africans, Andy van der Velde, Ronny Muhl and Mike Patterson who have summited Mt Everest during this climbing season. And then, on a slightly different note, JHB section member Dr Gwen Morgan is doing things slightly different. She has joined the Caudwell X-treme Everest team. This is an expedition consisting of 45 doctors, and 208 volunteers, who will be testing the genetic component of adaptation to hypoxia and high altitude on Everest. They will also be doing research on exercise at altitude. The Caudwell X-treme Everest expedition is a University of London project. They departed from London on the 17th of March and will be staying on the mountain for four months. Who knows what lies in the future? Genetic testing to see who is likely to make it to the top? For more information on the project see http://www.xtreme-everest.co.uk/news_detail.php?newsid=526. I have also added a bit from Gwen's online Base Camp Blog. See the website for news and updates.

"After 2 weeks on the magnificent Khumbu trail, the Base Camp Science team has now had almost 3 weeks to settle into our new home. Nestled between the towering peaks of Pomo Ri, Lingtren and Khumbutse, and beneath the Western Ridge of Mt Everest itself, EBC is a beautiful and stark place. The mornings are typically crisp with glowing sunshine and deep blue skies. The night time low temperatures of down to -18°C melt into sweltering 28°C at midday in the tents. Then the weather creeps up the Valley, making for chilly and sometimes snowing afternoons. These factors combine to ensure that not only the altitude, but also the scenery of EBC is breath-taking.

Our Camp sprawls across a large area of prime Base Camp real estate. The CXE tent town is so big that we consider it to have several boroughs. Avalanche View is an up-market area, about 50m from the tail of the Khumbu Ice Fall. Then there is the Ghetto, where most of the climbing team lives (soon to be deserted when its inhabitants head up the mountain). Lake View is a swanky area, but there is a constant threat of being flooded as the snow and ice melt. Mac presides over the camp from his mansion in Eagle View, which is just above Rodeo Drive, home to the Dave the Godfather of the Base Camp Science team.

The Team has settled into a very comfortable routine at Base Camp. The lab is running very well, and we are charging through the base camp research. We are testing on four days per week and have already tested 3 of the 13 Trek groups. Our three rest days each week are spent engaged in the exciting activities of the area: exploring, ice climbing, washing (clothes and us) and general relaxation. Already we have made trips to Pomo Ri Camp 1 and Kala Patar, from where we had stunning views of the Khumbu Ice Fall, Western Cwm, Lhotse and the summit of Everest itself. Evenings are spent with the trekkers, if there is a group in "town", or else watching movies projected onto the wall of our own mess tent. Many books are being devoured, the chess ladder is heating up and our frequent song nights are always raucously well attended.

If the first 3 weeks of Base Camp Life are anything to go by, we are in for a magnificent 2 months... watch this space for details!"

Gwen

3.ROCK 'N ROAD

The biggest event to hit the SA climbing world...

Somebody tried to persuade me that golf was better than climbing the other day.Poor uninitiated lost soul I thought, while he looked at me like I was out of my tree.

Golf has the fresh air.Golf has the beautiful views thanks to the relentless pursuit of developers in pristine corners of the globe.Golf has its own social set, as well as specialised gear and apparel to go junkie over. Golf is also a sport opening up more and more to the female of the species.It is very unlikely for you to fall to your death while playing golf and you probably won't get too many weird injuries either.So why not rather play golf?

To most of us climbers the answer is obvious. And in September, there will be a whole new reason to avoid the golf course.

There are lots of rumors and opinions on the club – any organization with a particular stance (couldn't help the pun) will draw comment.Sometimes you have to demonstrate what you are about, and actions speak louder than words.

The MCSA Johannesburg section is preparing the ground-breaking "Rock and Road Trip" to further one of the major aims of the club – to develop climbing in South Africa.We're going to gather an elite selection of highly skilled climbers from across the country and pit them against merciless rock problems within reach of Gauteng.

On the 14th September, we'll fly them up here in time for a kick-off party that is sure to attract the boisterous Jozi climbing crowds.

The next day they will head to Bergheim Resort in the cradle of the ancient Magaliesberg rock.This venue will provide an unprecedented opportunity for Gauteng to witness the masters at work.The evening will see a gathering around the fire to solicit the hottest climbing tips from those who have them.

Moving on the 17 September to the Mecca of SA sport climbing, Waterval Boven, climbers will begin to gear up for the major challenge of the trip – a superfinal staged alongside Roc Rally 2007.

They will spend the week on some of the most notorious routes in the country.The Roc Rally on the weekend of the 22-23 September is the largest annual climbing event in SA, which customarily sees over 300 people competing (for those who live in a hole and don't know).

The finale will see the Rock and Road Trip A-list pitted against a newly opened, staunchly hard route, resulting in a winner from each of the men's and women's sections.

The crowds will gasp and even the most dyed-in-the-wool golf player will pause to watch.It's going to be set up like never before so that we get to watch every muscle-wrenching moment.

I really don't know what a round of golf has to offer against this trip.I can't imagine you do either – so bring your friends, family and colleagues to show them once and for all why climbing is more exciting, more breathtaking, more social and, well, more plain fun than a round of chasing a little white ball around the lawn.

Want to know who has signed up? Here is a list that will put your forearms into spasm just by reading it... **Marijus Smigelskis, Matt Bush, Justin Hawkins, Nauree Goheer, Ben Harper, Brendan Hurner, Clinton Martinengo and others**

If you think you have something to add to the organization of the trip – by suggestion, volunteered skills or good ole financial assistance, email rockandroad@mail.com

Rock and Road LOC

5. INNIEKOPPIE- TRAD CHALLENGE

How about winning some beer for a change? This was the first prize of the Inniekoppie trad speed and endurance competition that was held in the Tonquani Complex in the Magaliesburg on Saturday the 19 May. The second prize was some prussik loops and the third prize was to buy the beer!!! This was not all that was strange about this comp; the starting time was at sunrise!! Now we can never complain again about the 8 am start for the Roc Rally. But the worst still to come, the finishing time is **3 hours after sunset**, a total endurance test.

There was way back in the 80's a similar trad comp in Tonquani which was won by Ian Slatem and John Brown. Then there was also a handicap system and they also started at Cederberg Campsite. Inniekoppe however was unique in that it was a true endurance feat, combined with the skills involved in climbing at night with a head torch.There was a good response, with teams in all the following categories competing: all guys, all girls, mixed and Veterans (total age over 100 years). There was also a lot who came along to support and enjoy the excess beer floating around. There were also those who arrived on the day, not knowing there was a comp, and wondered, "What is going on here?"

The scoring was fair but made a lot of work for the organisers. The competitors got points for climbing a pitch in 3 possible ways: First from the grade of the pitch relative to their handicap, then by bonus points which was allocated to certain classics, and thirdly if the pitch was climbed for the first time or so called "flushed". The flash bonus points were intended to benefit the climbers who have not climbed much in the area. This was a generous amount and the competitors who used this in their tactics did well. There was also bonus points for the number of kloofs visited and points deducted for being late back.

Congratulations to the following teams:

Mens

1st Douard and Neil - Douard le Roux and Neil Margetts with 3690 points from 47 pitches including two grade 21's and ten grade 20's.

2nd Gravity Draining - Gert Voster and Riaan Bredenkamp with 3540 points

3rd Eating Pap - Alard Hufer and Mark Seuring with 3340 points

Ladies

1st Calamity Janes - Shelly Plumb and Mariane Pretorius

Mixed

1st Mr and Mrs Smith - Graham and Christie Terrell

2nd Mercedes Benz - Bernard Sipes and Marian Penso

Veterans

1st Spring Chickens - Greg Devine and Dave Taylor

The competition as a whole went very well, with little to worry about. This was thanks to the hard work of Hector Pringle and his team. We are truly grateful to people like Hector who reach far, high and wide to fill our climbing calendar with fun and adventure. One can truly look up to pioneers such as Hector, who stretch us above where we thought was possible. Thanks Hek, good one, keep up there.

Neil Margetts

6. KAROO CLIMBING - NIEU BETHESDA

A Google Earth type view of the Sneeuberg range reflects the quaint town of nearby Nieu Bethesda, especially in winter - the tall white self-standing church steeple of Kompasberg surrounded by the timeless corrugated flat roofed range of the Karoo Mountains of Cambedoo in the Eastern Cape.

Kompasberg has seen many hikers on its belfry, I noticed graffiti scratched in the ironstone dating back to the 1870's, and the summit book is filled with religious sentiments to the glory of the view. The western face has seen few climbing attempts, mostly by climbers from the Eastern Cape chapter of the MCSA. The first documented climb recorded by Derek Marshall's route guide was in the early 1920's with much activity occurring in the seventies, including an alpine style ice climb up the prominent gully. The face itself reminds me of Devil's Tower in Wyoming, a cog-like granite structure just waiting for aching fist and hand jam off-width climbing.

The town itself is steeped in history, although just over a century old. It was formed when a Calvinist minister from Graaff-Reinet arranged for a part of the farm "Uitkyk" to be purchased from a local farmer to facilitate sermons locally in lieu of the long dusty trek to Graaff-Reinet. The farmer agreed, on a few conditions - one being that no alcohol be sold in the town, which may explain why it has taken so long for climbers to be exposed to the mountain. This law was relinquished in the late eighties and a wonderful pub, "Two Goats" now thrives selling home brewed ales and various cheeses. An inspiring church able to seat 700 now also resides as the centrepiece of this wonderfully lush valley.

The world renowned "Owl House" is the town's main form of income - ironically as the creator Helen Martins was shunned as eccentric by the conservative folk of the time. The house she created is now a museum and the concrete menagerie of the "Camel Yard" and her vibrant use of crushed and coloured glass in her house is truly an experience not to be missed. Across the road from her house fossils can be found in the riverbed and there are guided tours, as well as a small museum, explaining their formation. One can also take a donkey cart tour of the town with Jakob on one of his "lekker sweet donkey rides" while he gives a colourful history of the town. Athol Fugard occasionally resides in the town and has restored a theatre for the local population.

The town has a "Backpackers Lodge" which serves up a great lamb potjie and reasonable accommodation as well as many guest houses which many people use as an overnight karoo experience on their way to the coast. There are restaurants serving wonderful home-cooked meals such as the "Karoo Kitchen" which has excellent chocolate cake. Those wishing to self cater should stock up *en route* as the supplies in the town are sparse. This reflects the resistance to change of the town - there are no streetlights, which provides for a magnificent view of the night sky, as well as the obvious absence of a petrol station. There are threats of development but local resistance to the projects has thwarted them so far. The town voted against having a cell phone tower on the surrounding hills so reception is poor in the area and more than one tourist has been stranded on one of the two 30km dirt roads into the town.

There is much scope for climbing and hiking in the area. The obvious climbing crag is Kompasberg, a sundial shaped feature, a 45 minute drive north of the town. A 4 x 4 will save a lengthy walk-in on the farm road. Once one has hiked three quarters of the way up the mountain there are trad routes approximately 200m long in the medium to difficult range which have much exposure to heighten the experience. There are also plenty of lines that need a first ascent. Route finding may sometimes be a problem and the start of some of the climbs a bit chossy, however the rewards further up are worth the sweat. Mist and summer showers as well as snow in winter can add to the thrill of the climb. Descent is usually done via the well marked hiking trail on the northern side of the mountain. Contact either Derek Marshall or myself for the route guide and the relevant people to contact for permission to climb Kompasberg can be found therein. Alternatively the owners of the "Karoo Kitchen" can help arrange access.

Following the river upstream out of town one comes across some excellent bouldering and crags with huge potential for bolted routes, literally fifteen minutes walk along an established path from the edge of the village, in a setting that makes one feel guilty not to be climbing in *velskskoene*. Those preferring a hike can follow the river to its source - a three hour meander which gives one the feeling that you're the only person on this beautiful planet.

There are other valleys I have yet to explore in the region but sightings from afar reveal what seems to be good rock for both sport and trad development. The idea is to get into "karoo mode" - spend a week or two in the region and find routes that have only been explored by other wildlife so far. Following this mindset Gareth Frost and I opened some routes on Tafelberg near Middelburg and bouldered north of Nieu Bethesda and had a wonderful time. Chatting to local farmers will usually gain you access as well as a cup of coffee and an interesting tale or two about the crags.

Through trial and error I've decided that climbing the local slate outcrops is not a great idea, some solo exploits on a crag I've named the "Howl House" were ground breaking, literally, and a climb up "Aasvoël Krans", south of the town, with Lester Jackson and Andy Hartmeier was basically a 50m solo climb as we placed gear off our rack to get rid of the weight and left me looking and feeling like a sun bleached goat herder. On the summit of this *koppie* my father and I found many Boer War names carved in the rock - access possible via a difficult scramble on the other end of the *Krans*.

Nieu Bethesda, eight hours from Johannesburg, should be an essential part of any nationwide road trip, with its friendly folk, diverse options for climbing styles as well as time for contemplation along its sluice lined roads, when one has trouble holding cutlery.

* *Bethesda - House of Goodwill (John 5:2)*

Mike Sporen

Note: The editor is planning to set up a guided hiking and abseiling business for the holiday seasons in the town, and is not sure of the interest at this stage. Sounds like and awesome initiative, so contact Mike Sporen [mike.sporen@gmail.com] 079 279 4352 for more details.

7. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY- 5 June 2007

World Environment Day is celebrated each year on 5 June under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Each year has a different theme and this year's theme is "Melting Ice - a hot topic?", and has to do with environment or climate change. Here are a few interesting tips on how energy can be saved (very pertinent for us with rolling black outs the order of the day), and emissions of greenhouse gases can be contained:

1. Turning the heating thermostat down, and the air conditioning up, by 1.5°C saves around 1 tonnes of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) a year. (Well, maybe this won't work in our houses where we do not have central heating, and given the past week's freezing temperatures)
2. An energy-efficiency refrigerator could save nearly half a ton of CO₂ a year, compared with an older model.

3. Insulating windows, doors, and electrical outlets and adding more insulation to the attic and basement reduces energy consumption
 4. Compact fluorescent, spiral light bulbs are 75% more efficient than standard light bulbs
 5. On average a person throws away 10 times his or her bodyweight in rubbish per year. One kilogram sent to landfill produces 2 kg of methane. The simplest way of reducing this burden is to buy and waste less unnecessary packaging.
 6. Recycling paper, glass, aluminum, steel and other materials to produce "new" materials, can make energy savings.
 7. Using both sides of the paper and recycling it can save 2.5 kg of greenhouse gases for every kilogram of paper used.
- These are just a few ideas to conserve our planet. Read more on the World Environment Day website at <http://www.unep.org/wed/2007/english/>.

8. HANDY HINTS FOR YOUR GEAR

Marking the middle of your rope: Unless you can afford a fancy-bicoloured rope, it is always wise to mark the middle point... especially sport climbers who use single rope techniques, and run the risk of being lowered off the end of the rope. Ka-splat!! Physical markers like tape etc are a waste of time, as they come off easily, or they jam your belay/abseil device. The easiest, is to use a black permanent marker pen. Is this safe? Yes. I have contacted the technical department of a leading rope manufacturer, and this is what they recommend. Apparently the solvents (Xylene, or Toluene) found in most marker pens will not affect the strength of the rope. Apparently, they evaporate so quickly that they stay on the sheath, and do not penetrate to the core of the rope. Don't be shy either, one or two good 3 cm wide patches will ensure that it is clearly visible, even in poor light, and will take longer to wear off than a shy skinny marking.

Washing (detoxifying) your climbing shoes: Yes, we all need to do this. The fact that vultures circle above us when we climb is not because we look like we are about to fall and become lunch, but because after 6 months of wear without socks, our climbing shoes smell of carrion!!! Cleaning them is not that bad. Remove the laces, fill a bucket with hot water, throw in a table spoon of sunlight soap and three table spoons of Jik, stir, and soak overnight. Next day, lay into them with a scrubbing brush, and then rinse well, or place them in a front-loading washing machine on rinse cycle. Dry in the shade, or use a fan (not heated) to speed up the drying. The Jik is likely to change the colour of your shoes a bit, but at least a starving hyena won't run off with them at night (and die!).

Washing your rope and slings: To reduce odour, and to remove damaging grit from within the fibres, your rope can be washed. Rope brushes can be bought, but are a labour of love to use (gets those forearms pumping©) For the lazy climber, place the rope in a front loading machine, use a mild soap like Woolite, and wash on a medium cycle (no more than 40°C). If you have a top loading machine, the rope should first be placed in a net bag, before being washed, as top loading machines can damage the rope. Dry in the shade and use a fan (not heated) to speed up the drying.

Fixing the triggers on cams: The triggers on some makes of cam, (in particular the old style Friends and Camalots) often used to fray, and eventually break. This is A- frustrating, because it is a mission to find a replacement part, and B- expensive (like cams aren't). An easy solution to the technically gifted, is to replace the wires with a wonderful product sold at most Fishing (angling to the snobs) shops in Jo'burg as nylon coated trace wire. Buy the heaviest grade you can find – the stuff used to catch sharks. Cut the right length, and feed it through the cam as before. To fix the ends on the cam lobes, thread them through, and tie a single overhand knot on the other side. Pull the knot as tight as you can, with a pair of pliers, until the knot develops memory, and no longer slips. Then, like magic, sear the knot with a match, until the nylon melts over the knot and fixes it in a blob. Snip of the waste ends, and there you have it, fixed. To make friends and influence people, share the rest of the 10m roll of wire with your climbing buddies. If you are still struggling, ask the editor for a demo.

Cam Maintenance: Keeping your Cams clean and in optimal condition is important since they may be the only thing between you and the deck. So it's a good idea to periodically clean your Cams with a mixture of warm water and mild detergent. Swish the cam head in this solution while working the trigger bar and keeping the cam sling dry. (A stiff bristled brush will help clean around the springs and inside the cam lobes.) Don't use corrosive substances like acetone or petroleum-based solvents that can cause irreparable damage to webbing and plastic. Rinse in clean, warm water, shake off excess water and dry at room temperature. Once dry, apply your favourite graphite- or silicone-based lubricant with a long stem applicator. Spray in and around the head of each camming device, being careful to NOT get lubricant on the cam lobes themselves. Make sure to wipe off any excess lubricant. Avoid using heavy viscosity oils or greases that attract dirt. Repeat the above steps as often as necessary.

Peter Adrian

9. MCSA MOUNTAIN AWARDS

While previously the MCSA only had a Gold Badge Award, this has now been complemented by The President's Award and The Mountain Award. A Section of the Club makes a nomination of a candidate for an award to the Central Committee. There are laid down procedures which need to be followed. Contact the Honorary Secretary of the MCSA, Jenny Paterson (secretary@mcsa.co.za) for details. Each of the MCSA Awards is accompanied by a special certificate, a medal and an embroidered cloth badge of the MCSA.

The first MCSA Mountain Awards have been presented on 14 March 2007: The MCSA Mountain Award was presented to ALARD HÜFNER for outstanding achievements in mountaineering and rock climbing, especially big wall climbing, both nationally and internationally, and in particular for opening numerous new climbing routes and making first ascents of a high degree of difficulty; ascents of major peaks and routes; exploration of climbing areas (locally or abroad); maintaining a high standard of competency and technical ability over an extended period of time; proven leadership in mountaineering.

The MCSA Mountain Award was also made to ULRIKE KIEFER for outstanding achievements in mountaineering, both nationally and internationally, and in particular for participation in, leadership and organisation of international expeditions; international first ascents and ascents of major peaks; maintaining a high standard of competency and technical ability over an extended period of time; proven leadership in mountaineering; exploration of unknown areas and previously unclimbed mountains; organisation of two International Climbing Meets on behalf of the MCSA; serving on the JHB Section Committee for 13 years, and on the Central Committee as Convenor, Expeditions.

10. SNIPPETS

Smash and drag: I have always fantasised about doing this, putting those hulky sport climbing forearms and grip strength to good use, but this **true story** is brilliant. Here is an actual account of what happened to a prominent female club member.

"On a Saturday morning I was driving along Empire Road, minding my own business, stopped at a red robot, when my eye caught a yellow jersey a tad bit too close to the passenger window. The next moment there was a shower of glass and a long, dark arm reached in for my handbag, which was tucked in under the passenger seat. I grabbed that arm above the wrist and managed to hold it there, just out of reach of the bag. A little jerk with the car must have helped to bring the body belonging to the arm a bit off-balance. Then the robot turned green, the car in front of me sped off and I followed still holding on to that arm. When I was sure that there was no resistance left and the arm and body turned rather limp, I let go. What exactly happened to the unfortunate would-be-robbler is not known." **YEAHHH!!!! Crime busters!**

11. LAND AND ACCESS

Waterval Boven: Emakhaseni Local Municipality has terminated a 25-year lease contract agreement with Elandskrans Holiday Resort on 13 February as a result of a breach of contract by the lessee (failure to pay for both services and rental fee as per a clause in the lease contract to curb further escalation or increase of costs). The resort will be temporarily closed until further notice by the municipality. For enquiries contact Mr. Daniel Mkhonza: Legal Services Section at 013-253 1121 (07:45-16:30).

Alternative new accommodation can be found at Tranquillitas, walking distance of Wonderland (4 chalets, massive swimming pool, ideal for groups and/or families, camping 'in progress') or, of course Gustav at Roc 'n Rope (013-257 0363;

Fax: 0866 13 8228; 082-753 3695; www.rocrope.com). Good news is that 4-5 months have been crime-free. For lots of new routes: www.climb.shorturl.com.

Draakensberg Sentinel: Many climbers leave equipment at the base of the gully which leads up to the start of the Angus-Leppan Route ie the gully between the main peak and the gendarme. At the base of this gully is a scree slope of large boulders and one particular place where bags etc can be left out of sight. Gavin Raubenheimer (082-9905876; 033-3433168; <http://www.peakhigh.co.za>) reports that recently while he was guiding clients, they left kit there and while

on the third pitch they noticed a man with two dogs walking along the base of the cliff at the start of 'Here be Dragons'. The man systematically went along the base of the cliff looking behind every rock as if he knew there was something to find. He eventually went all the way around the gendarme and found their gear. Just a head-torch and boots were taken. The case was reported and some suspects questioned by the SAPS but the goods was never recovered. It seemed like the man was known to the gate guards.

Bolting: if you want to place bolts on any MSCA property, please check with Neil Margetts 0836693028 if it is OK!

12. MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome the following new members: Alaric & NicolaPagel, John Tanner, Kenneth Hales, Daniela Mariotti, Ryan Matthews, Craig Thomas, Vanessa Mayman, Derek Donkin, Craig Peters (transfer from Cape Town), Lynn Morris, Erik Verster, Pieter Jooste, Robert Picton, and family members Jessica and Garrick Pagel and Veyda Magg.

Deepest sympathies: With sadness we advise the passing away of Marguerite Barker and Hermann Vogl. Our deepest sympathies to their family and friends.

Outstanding Subs 2007. Members who have not paid their subs, please do so as soon as possible. Our thanks to members who have made donations to our various funds.

Bequest: Our section has received a bequest from the late Harry Barker.

13. FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

WEDNESDAY CLUB NIGHTS 8:00pm

Come Hungry 11th July 2007

The MCSA Food Network presents, the **Club Cook-a-thon**. Watch a selection of guest and MCSA celebrity chefs entertain you with their mountain cooking skills. It must be light, nutritious, and most of all delicious, and it all has to come out of a backpack! If you want to enter, contact Neil Margetts 0836693028 or Peter Adrian 0827765399 or simply come hungry!

Girl Power 18th July 2007

A surprise farewell party will be held for Rachel Brickford, and will also feature a slide show of **women on rock**, also a couple of funny ones too! The show will be conducted by Megan Watkins and Bronwyn Smith.

Babies in the BUSH 25th July 2007

Parents and tots are invited to share their experiences, on how to deal with babies and toddlers on climbing and hiking meets. Come join us, the more the merrier!

Hot Climbing in SA 8th August 2007

An awesome slide show by Eric Riemann of some of the hottest SA climbers, on South Africa's hardest scariest routes. And a preview to Rock n Road.

DVDs to be shown at club evenings:

Tea for Three: The South African production company Fresh Air Crew did it again: it latest documentary "Tea for Three" won the "Best film on Mountain Culture Award" at VIMFF 2007 and it was selected by the panel of judges as the best!

The documentary tells the story of three friends who have spent a lifetime climbing together, and they reflect on where the journey has taken them, and where it will lead. With a cumulative age of 145 years these three men are attempting to grow old gracefully.

E 11: One of the best all-round climbers in the world is on a mission – to take rock climbing to new levels of both difficulty and danger. Dave MacLeod attempts to be the first to climb 'Rhapsody' - the hardest traditional rock climb ever and the first to achieve the grade of E11.7a (trad f8c+US 5.14c).

First Ascent: join us on a globe-trotting journey to witness the exploits of today's top climbers and their pursuit of climbing's pinnacle achievement .

Rocklands: hidden deep within the mountains of Southern Africa, lies Rocklands. Follow a troupe of world renowned climbers on a three month journey as they explore the magical landscape of the Cederberg Mountains

14. GET FIT AND READY FOR:

BOVEN ROCK RALLY: 21-24 September 2007.

FOUR PEAKS MOUNTAIN RACE: This will take place on 29 September over 24km in the Witteberg near Ficksburg (in the Moolmanshoek Private Nature Reserve). More info from Derek Odendaal (derekrits@mweb.co.za).

SKY RUN: This mountain race of 100km over 2 days will take place 1-2 December 2007. The route is over the summits of the Witteberg from Lady Grey to Tiffendel Ski Resort near Rhodes. Contact: Adrian Saffy (082-5665668; saffyav@icon.co.za).

You gotta be crazy!!!!

ICE CLIMBING COURSE: Want to expand your climbing repertoire? Ice climbing is a style not usually associated with South Africa's safari landscape and is a wonderful mountain experience. This year's ice climbing course for novices will be held at Oxbow in Lesotho on 7th and 8th July 2007. Basic climbing skills essential and boots that fit crampons are an essential requirement. There is limited space available on the course, so book early. Gear rental available from the club. Contact Mike Sporen on 079 279 4352.

MCSA ANNUAL DINNER will be held in Cape Town 13 October. Details to follow.

Adventure Academy- "the shop"

Our first shop is open! - Adventure Academy has opened its doors to another new and exciting adventure.

At Adventure Academy we take pride in not only being able to offer Quality through a wide selection of Services such as our uniquely compiled Adventure Sports Packages, Private & group Functions, Corporate Teambuilding, Bus Shuttle Services, Accommodation and Conferencing, but now we have taken another adventurous leap and gone into retail where we provide and supply a wide range of Outdoor adventure gear which includes infamous name brands such as **Montrail, Beal, Black Diamond, Saltic** and many more.

In celebration of our opening we have a great offer for all **members of the Mountain Club of South Africa**. To all members who have not forgotten to renew their membership on an annual basis we will give you **10%** discount on your purchase inside our store.

All you have to do is produce your membership card and let the adventures begin.

Unfortunately this offer does not apply to prospective members.

So, why not make your way to:

Shop 124

Bel Air Mall - upper level

Cnr. Hans Strijdom &

Olievenhout

Northriding

Or give us a call on:

Tel (011) 462 6953 or 08600TEAMS (83267)

Fax 086 504 5702

And conquer the elements!