



August 2008

1. EDITORIAL

Picture slicing your second shot on a dogleg fifteenth, into the rough. Muttering to yourself, you enter the bushes to look for the ball, cursing the day you took up this crazy sport. As you enter the tree-line you notice a mess of tents and salvaged rubbish. Drop-out Golfers – off the radar and off the grid in pursuit of their passion. Raiding trash cans for meals and swiping the odd club from unsuspecting players to aid in the pursuit of the perfect swing.

Climbing is a culture, not just a sport. Camp 4 in Yosemite is a living memorial to the extreme elements of our weekend excursions. No other sport has this kind of commitment from its players. We travel to the extremes of the globe to exercise our Lilliputian passion on Mother Earth.

This may have to do with the survival element climbing offered our ancestors, escaping predators and foraging to keep our families alive, an evolutionary tool ingrained within, forcing us to constantly develop mentally, spiritually and physically, or just a need to be amongst the energies of the wild with the ones we love. Or maybe just a weekend amble exploring the gorges for the lost Kruger Millions ...

This is why the development of our youth to the exposure of hiking and climbing is so important. The level of trust between leader and belayer is second to none, and the friendships forged after a successful route last a lifetime. Also, respect for the fragile ecology we manipulate daily can only really be honed *in situ*. This all translates into the opportunity for a fulfilling life for the individual as well as a responsible society.

The Club has been involved in a lot of diverse activities this year. Read about how the Cook-a-thon had a great turn-out and the various competitions around the country garnered more support with each event. Also, quite a few new crags have been opened, especially in the Northern Province, offering exciting new trading opportunities. I hope to have a couple of articles highlighting these in future issues of the newsletter.

Mike Sporen

2. MCSA Youth Johannesburg Reaches for Their Own Thing



A youth climbing group was launched with phenomenal success. All started in late July at St. Peters climbing gym with Roland Magg and a couple of boys. And already now there are on average 9 boys and girls under the age of 12 and a couple of teens every Saturday being trained in sport climbing and having fun.

At St. Peters school in Paulshof is a small but useable climbing wall that is leased by the MCSA for use by club members. It is primarily for bouldering but it is also possible to hang up top ropes.

Some young climbers like Bryan Meenehan, Riaan van Jaarsveld and Kyle Meenehan have enthusiastically become involved in training the youth and offer the necessary support to sustain the training sessions. Benedikt Hering (aka Ben10), a temporary member of the Jo'burg section and experienced youth leader from the German Alpine Association has invested his time and knowledge in establishing the youth training and will assist interested people to become youth leaders on par with overseas standards.

The outcome of these training sessions: the teens train for a climbing competition in September, to compete in the Gauteng Schools Climbing League that was established by Neil Margetts and school coaches involved in climbing.

The young ones enjoy their first experiences with climbing and belaying and/or improve their skills. The format of the sessions involves fitness training and climbing games encouraging the development of technique under the auspices of fun. The consistency of attendance by most youths indicates they are really enjoying the mix of training and games.

The establishing youth group also arranged a hike in the spirit of the Beijing Olympic games – "Friendship and Peace". Youths have been offered discounted tickets for the Banff Film Festival, and look forward to the Cedarberg Campfire meet on the first week of October for camping out and trad climbing. This youth group is working hard to establish relationships with other outdoor orientated groups such as youth groups from previously disadvantaged communities and the scouts.

And this shall be just the beginning after only one month! It is hoped to catch the interest of many more youths so the future will be filled with several climbing teams of focussed age groups and alot more dedicated youth meets. Anyone interested in youth development and youth leading, especially young climbers, is more than welcome to come and experience the power of the MCSA youth. Just get in contact with youth@jb.mcsa.org.za. But all this would not happen without the infallible efforts of Diane Arvanitakis, youth convenor of the committee.

A large and strong youth group will hold the future of the MCSA Jo'burg Section in good stead.

Benedikt Hering

3. COOK-A-THON

The annual MCSA Cook-a-thon is a seriously competitive event, not one that can be taken lightly. Entries to the event were advertised to the Mountain as well as Hiking Clubs and the pressure was on, not only to get your entries in, but to select the perfect repas for the event. An array of prizes made the event all the more appealing. Joking around at my Printing lesson I managed to persuade my friends to enter with me as a team. From that moment on we discussed recipes at length, possible combinations, as well as the importance of starters, and how our skills could be harnessed.

Having finalized our menu we decided we needed a practice run, which was no mean feat for three parents (two children a piece, and no extra spouses) on a Monday night. It involved serious multi-tasking, and working to pace in order for the pudding to be cooked and prepared in under an hour that the recipe book stated it needed, with no messing or burning of said offspring.

The evening cane and the battle lines were drawn with the Russians in the one corner and the Italian base camp on the other side of the iron curtain. The Russians were seriously intimidating, with a backpack that brought forth courses all involving more than one ingredient as well as garnishes. Everyone raved about their unique tuna soup. Dave's meal was a bachelor's delight. Idiot-proof cuisine cooked in the bag with no dirty dishes to follow. (Miraculously it even tasted great and was decidedly nutritiously sound.) Contact Dave at Drifters for details.

Andrew spoofed fast food. Prepared in a jiffy, as fast as you could open the wrapper and tasting decidedly like chicken. No culinary skills needed, packed with good taste and a high nutrient and calorie base, tasting exactly like it said on the wrapper.

Ulrike's lightweight, easy to prepare pork ribs on Couscous won her one nights' accommodation for 4 at Out of Africa for the most traditional meal.

Peter Adrian and co. (The Mad Mammals up a Mountain) had us seriously worried. Not only did he bring his pasta maker and the Pasta Mafia to invade base camp but he proceeded to make fresh pasta in the space of an hour. (For the culinary geniuses that we were great cooking involved snipping open the Ina Paarman packet or beating the instant custard powder with boiling water.) To see the pasta strung over ropes over the burglar bars left us feeling seriously doubting our abilities. He won a free massage for 2 at the Sparkling Waters Health Spa for the "most stressed chef".

The Russians came in third place with R100 worth of free pancakes at Pick-a-Pancake, while we, the artists of The Hard Rock café, managed a second place for our Chicken Tikka Curry followed by Steamed Ginger Pudding and hot custard. We have to decide which Sunday to go to Mount Grace Hotel to enjoy our Buffet lunch together.

Graham and Christy wrapped up in style with a hikers dream. Clinching the Canopy tours and Sparkling Waters Sunday Buffet for four with brand names we know and love, carefully combined with seriously little fuss and some mushrooms for an awesome sun-dried tomato, bacon and pasta mix.

Lindsay Gaydon

4. PETZL Rock and Road KZN 2008

The Rock and Road trip this year was held in KZN and was an event sponsored by the MCSA. It is a yearly event where the best sport climbers in the country are selected and come to climb together. The purpose of moving the event around to different provinces is to keep some of the elements from getting stale and to expose the climbing on offer in other regions to our best sport climbers. KZN this year proved to supply some of the best rock available in our country. There were many aspects of this year's trip that were a great success and motivational to everyone that saw the action.

The Bouldering comp at DBN Varsity had a dynamic finish where Paul Bruard and Ben Harper were running tie for first place until in the last 30 seconds Ben with a desperate lunge got up the final problem to clinch first place. The Mentor day was next, this was where we arranged 30 youths from a number of local schools around DBN to meet us at Shongweni and the climbers climbed with them for the day. This demonstrated that the MCSA is active in development in youth, and youth from other colours, cultures and backgrounds. It was strange to see how many of our countries top climbers were passionate in development of the future. They were also very patient in answering the thousands of questions, and hours of belaying and coaching. The event was filmed by Urban Brew Studios, who will be adding a 6 min slot in a program called XXXXXXXX on SABC 2 later this year.

The Flash Bounty was next on the cards, where our top climbers were given down the challenge to "Flash" (get up first go) some desperate lines. The most exciting part was where Ben Harper and Clinton Martinengo both flashed Supernova with the boggling grade of 30! This climb overhangs at 45 deg continuously for over 25m. The red point challenge follow for the next 3 days, where the climbers visited Magnetic Wall, Boneyard, the Canyon, Rasta Cave and the awesome Wave Cave. Climbing at the Wave Cave proved to be phenomenal and unique, overhanging for over 15m in the 20m to 25m climbs. This required unique skills some involving heel hooking, knee barring, twists, and drop knees. By the end of the challenge endurance came into play, with many of the climbers falling away after the 2nd day.

The final 8 guys to go through were (in order from highest score): Clinton Martinengo, Andrew Pedley, Ben Harper, James (Jimbo) Smith, Steve Bretherick, Simon Lowe, Paul Bruyere and Benjamin de Charmoy. The top 6 girls were Karen Varga, Nadine Methner, Gosia Lipinska, Naureen Goheer, Julia Wakeling and Rachelle de Charmoy. These climbers went through to the final at Howick Falls.

This final venue proved to supply a new dimension to the skills required to master by the competitors; controlling terror. They had to do an abseil down, move from climb to climb along a steel cable. After attempting four hard lines and a Tyrolean traverse they abseiled down to a boat to be rowed ashore. Every move was watched via a big screen TV and microwave link, while our heroes battled it out on the vertical walls next to the thundering falls. In supreme style Karen Varga powered her way to the top place by almost flashing Kiss the Guns 27. A nail biting finish in the men's category unfolded where Clinton (Cling -On) showed amazing endurance to hang around on the crux moves of the final route. He determinedly worked out a way to get 3 moves further to clinch the title for first place.

On reflection, we were pleased with the enthusiasm showed by all who took part and have seen great advances in SA sport climbing as a result of the Rock and Road trips. The important thing however is that the climbers were all grateful to the MCSA and PETZL for their sponsorship. Other contributors were: Over the Top Adventures, City Rock, Tranquillitas Adventure Farms, Telemedia, Wellbeing co., Nina, Bjorg and Gale, and WESSA Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve, many thanks to them as well.

Neil Margetts

5. EDELRID KATANA PRO ICE CLIMBING TOOLS - PLAY TIME REPORT

At first glance to the untrained eye, these tools look like some ancient weapon from a museum collection. A severe, pain inflicting device designed specifically for disembowelling one's enemy who is unfortunate enough to find themselves on the wrong end of a well aimed blow. Ironically, the Edelrid Katana Pro's are named after a type of Japanese "Samurai Sword", a formidable weapon indeed.

Luckily for us more learned mountain folk of the 21st century, we recognise these implements as ice climbing axes that we can use to assault our frosty foes up on the icy crags with the Edelrid Katana Pro Ice Tools.

After years of drooling over the exciting products that our Northern Hemisphere contemporaries have been privileged to make use of, we down here in sunny South Africa now also have the opportunity to go out and play in the winter landscapes and test our mettle with these specialized ice climbing gadgets. And specialized I certainly rate them after testing them out on an ice climbing weekend in the Lesotho Highlands. Let me share my experience with them;

As curved daggers compare to a penknife for inflicting special kinds of harm, so do the Katana Pro's compare to other general purpose ice tools for climbing exceptional ice routes.

The most striking characteristic of the Katana Pro's, in comparison to other tools, is their sheer lack of weight (540g). They feel light and versatile and easily make an extension of one's hand without resistance.

Another feature peculiar to the Katana Pro's, is their shaft which is not made from a tubular form but rather from a solid pressed bar. This does not appear to look as robust as other climbing tools but there is certainly nothing wrong about their strength. The aggressively toothed pick is well angled and fits neatly into the shaft to keep with the narrowed head profile.

Coloured in bright green, the ergonomically shaped grips of the Katana Pro's are orientated nicely to allow the climbers hand and wrist to remain in-line and strong when pulling steep moves on difficult routes.

Although the grips are easy to grasp and provide a couple of holding options, I found the plastic rather cheaply assembled and give the impression of being added on afterwards rather than being designed along with the rest of the tool. They also make a rather trashy sound when whacking in a solid placement.

This is where my first dislike of the Katana Pro's comes in, making solid placements, which I found certainly to be a challenging task. One of the drawbacks of being such a light tool, is that they more often than not rebounded back off the ice when striking and lack real momentum to carry the pick into a solid position. Even after a couple of good whacks, the tools never felt really stable and it took a bit of getting used to moving off rickety the placements.

This experience however was mostly limited to climbs in the lower grades, WI-4 and below and the Katana Pro's showed their true colours on much harder climbs.

Their superb hooking ability and swinging agility really come to the fore when they were put out to play on steep, overhanging icicles. Here stability is not as important as delicacy and the sharp, narrow picks provided ample purchase to allow a climber to pull on them with full body weight. They fit exceptionally well in between icicles and hook easily over cauliflower formations and with the eccentric grips they keep one's knuckles well clear of the ice. With your fingers clear of the cold, wet ice, climbing in fleece gloves is possible, if not recommended.

My overall opinion of the Katana Pro's is that they are fun tools to have when you want to go out and play on the wildly wicked icicles and dry-tool problems but they really lack performance on easier routes. It takes quite a bit of practise to climb effectively on easier angled ice and are left wanting of extra weight on bulges and slabs.

I certainly wouldn't mind having a set of Katana Pro's in my quiver as a second set of toys but could not see myself substituting a set of all-rounder ice axes with these expert climbing tools.

The Edelrid Katana Pro Ice Climbing Tools we had for testing were supplied to us courtesy of Tristan Firman of Vertigo Industries and Drifters Adventure Centre, Sandton City.

6. UIAA OLYMPIC "Friendship and Peace" Youth Hike



On the 24 August 2008, coinciding with the end of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, as part of the UIAA Global Youth Summit, the Jo'burg and Magaliesberg sections of the MCSA teamed up in the spirit of "friendship and peace" and reached out... finally leading 105 youths to the highest point in the NW province (1 852 metres) at Nooitgedacht.

Try as we experienced mountaineers might, the enthusiasm of the youths could not be contained – the 45 minute uphill trudge toward Upper Tonquani was devoured in song and they bounded their way joining the dots of Aloe Peglerae (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe_peglerae) past ruins of blockhouses from the Anglo-Boer war toward their only known reference point – the towers - leaving those experienced committee members of MCSA assigned 'youth leaders' in their dust (including our Chairman Chris Ziranek, administrator and treasurer). Those physically disadvantaged (there were two, not referring to age in this instance) also emerged from the dust achieving goals that can only be likened to those that any one of us able bodied mountaineers would aspire to.

As the first dedicated youth (and what fast became an outreach) meet, the Jo'burg section organized transport – in the form of a 60 seater bus – to commute youths from Soweto, Eldorado Park and Ennerdale to the Magaliesberg. The 1.5 hour bus journey offered youths the 'mountaineering in 3 points course' facilitated by Kyle Meenehan and Diane Arvanitakis. A group of scouts and Voortrekkers, also partook in the event, bringing to the mind the possibilities of the MCSA facilitating the formation of a 'Mountain Users group' discussed in recent years in the Jo'burg section. The Magaliesberg section made a (camping)weekend of the event offering 20 youths from children's homes in Jo'burg and Pretoria their first outing in a decade (for some). The significance of the event for these youths could be somewhat underplayed by those of us with abundant mountaineering experiences (and/or opportunities) and also our distance from such communities. Youth leaders from these communities upon hearing of this event celebrated the opportunity to get youths out of the environments that expose them to little more than drugs, alcohol and all that comes with 'bashes' and limited recreational opportunities in their neighbourhoods. The youths have since expressed their experiences in drawings and writing and look forward to the Cedarberg Campfire meet which has emerged as an opportunity to expose limited numbers of youths to the camping experience.



At the summit some formalities commemorated the occasion – sms messages to other teams nationally; a telephonic conversation between Anne Arran, the UIAA Youth Commission President, on a peak with youths in the UK with our MCSA president Roland Magg; and the singing of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" seemed fitting as it rolled through the landscape breaking the spell of the past.

Jenny Paterson must be acknowledged for her commitment to this initiative. After attending the UIAA Youth Commission meeting in Venice earlier on this year, she returned home summoning South Africans to take part in the event initiated by the CAI (Club Alpino Italiano). The Italians planned to (and did) summit 183 peaks and other countries endeavored achieve the 205 flame

initiative (representing the 205 nations participating at this years games). On the day other South African teams reached peaks at Lions Head (Cape Town), Stellenboschberg, Helderberg and Bronberg made for an estimated 185 youths at summits. While internationally young climber teams from Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Slovenia and Greece celebrated "Ekecheiria", the ancient Greeks' name for the peaceful period which reigned during the Olympic Games (see

www.theuiaa.org/news_104_UIAA-youth-mark-Olympic-peace for the international story). Some of the events expenses have been sponsored by the UIAA Global Youth Summit, while respective MCSA sections contributed resources such as volunteers, time and funds and MCSA t-shirts (from the Jo'burg section) toward the initiative. Another acknowledgement to Andrew Hoy, a Search and Rescue volunteer, who took a proactive attitude to the event and gave the organizers some peace of mind that help was at hand- he ended up having no more than a day out in the mountains.

The hike brought to mind many a lesson seasoned mountaineers have assimilated into knowledge that the first time hikers had to get their heads (and bodies) around. The planned expedition didn't take the form predicted; not a spectacular 'peak' at any stretch of the imagination, this particular summit reminds us of how mountaineering is more about the journey than the destination; and finally it has ignited friendships through our shared experience in (hearsay)the oldest mountain range on earth.

A whole hearted thank you to all those that contributed to the event, Diane

7. CLUB NEWS

Membership:

We slipped up awarding Oliver Barker the 50 years Long Standing Membership Award. We'll present Oliver with the certificate at a club evening. Apologies, Oliver.

New Members:

We welcome the following new members: Nico van Rensburg, Neil Lindsay, Leanne Gouws, Henk Appelo, Niki van de Toorn, Andrew Lane, ordinary; and family members Clara Adrian, Matthew & Justin Gouws, Matthew and Robert Lane.

Transfer from Hottentots Holland section Martin Büttner and temporary membership to Benedikt Hering from the German Alpine Association.

Forthcoming events: Club evenings

10 September: Talk on **Snakes and Snake bites** by Teresa Morgan

17 September: Presentation by Alex Harris **'The Long White Night – Unsupported to the South Pole'**

October 8: DVD a selection of films from **Petzi**

October 15: **Slide Show and Talk: 'Vredfort Dome'** Gerhard Benade.

October 29: **Presentation and Talk: 'You don't fool around with Mountains' Selebelo Selamolela.** Selebelo is the second person of African descent and the seventh South African to have summited Everest. He will also be presenting his book of the same title.

November 12: **Second Hand Gear and Book sale – yours and ours.**

