



August 2009

Quotation of the Month: "The best climber in the world is the one who's having the most fun. (Alex Lowe)"

CLUB NEWS

We welcome new members:

Reinhard Korb; Vivian van den Berg, Ivor Gerrard; Herman van Zyl; Peter Speed; Gail Mallinson; Deanne Kieser; Paul Mare; Byron Taylor; Jennifer Blenkinsop and Lynn van Collier.

Resigned:

Vivienne Mc Intosh gone to the Cape; Greg Hulley to the UK and Alan Day left a while ago, gone to Australia.

Congratulations : The Mountain Club of South Africa President's award was presented to Jenny Paterson at the club evening on 12 August.

The scroll reads:

For rendering outstanding service to the Mountain Club of South Africa and in particular for Serving as Honorary Secretary of the Club for five years, for service on the Johannesburg Section committee, and for her tireless, dedicated work over many years in the fields of conservation, administration, organisation, youth, publications and fund-raising at local, national and international levels. Congratulations Jenny.

Congratulations to: Erik Manson who celebrated his 80th birthday on 22 August. To Uschi who celebrated her 70th on 30 August.

Passed away:

As announced in our weekly reminders some weeks ago, with regret we advise the passing away of Andries Lategan. Andries transferred his membership to our section in 1991 from the Free State section and transferred back there in 2006. Andries looked after our Land & Access matters for many years. Our condolences to his family and friends.

Des Watkins passed away on 28 August. Des was known by our older members. Our sincere condolences to family and friends.

Events highlights:

September 16th:

Short Slide presentation: "David Frank visited one of the most remote towns in the USA in search of polar bears - a small Eskimo community on an island in the Arctic Ocean, just north of mainland Alaska. David will share a brief account of his trip and his photos of the bears."

September 30th:

WitsUniversityMountain Club Golden Anniversary. All former WUMC and other Witsies and other members are cordially invited to a cheese and wine evening at the Waverley Girl Guide Hall to celebrate 50 years of the WitwatersrandUniversityMountain Club. Young WUMC members would like to meet the oldies and the oldies would like to meet their contemporaries.

October 10th & 11th:

Joburg section's annual sing-song and campfire meet at Cedarberg. Meet leader Som Morkel.

November 15th, Sunday:

We have been invited by the Johannesburg Hiking Club to join them at a meet at Bergheim, followed by a bring-and-braai. Members R20pp; non-members R55.00 pp.

December 9th:

Annual Children's Christmas Party and Bring-and-Braai.

Please bring a small gift for your child that can be given to Father Christmas to hand to your child.

We need some slide shows / talks / ideas etc. suitable for our club evenings. We request members or non-members who have an interesting topic to let us know. We seem to be running out of ideas. Your help will be much appreciated.

Mountains and Air

James Pitman, a Joburg MCSA member, and his business partner Mike Blyth, have just completed a round the world flight from Springs to... Springs, by going left for quite a way (45,150km).

Their journey started on 18 July and ended on 27 August 2009. Welcome back guys, and well done!

James is a 50% shareholder in The Airplane Factory and grew up on a farm in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands of South Africa.

He is a qualified lawyer who completed a university degree in science prior to studying law. More recently, James has worked as a VP of a mining exploration company listed in London and Toronto. Following the successful sale of the mining business, James was able to give expression to his love of flying by joining Mike as his business partner in The Airplane Factory.

At a young age, James developed a deep love of the outdoors and adventure. He has also always been a keen sportsman and a traveller. For background information on some of his more recent adventures see www.noneedforparking.com. Here he details his flying / climbing trip around South Africa. There are amazing photos of Blouberg from the air amongst other things.

Have a look at their website detailing their amazing round the world trip at <http://www.airplanefactory.co.za/world/press.asp>

James has done El Cap and Trango Towers among the many other climbing (and now flying) adventures. We look forward to hearing more.

Rock 'n roll

Did someone say...‘Fetch that tree?’

(The after-party from hell)

PETZL Rock and Road EC 2009

With the finals wrapped up, it was time to head back to camp. Taking advantage of the last hour of sunlight, climbers flopped on the grass, cracked open beers, and kicked the ubiquitous hackey-sack from skanky sneaker to strop to boot. If only it could have stayed such a civilised scene. But then, would that really be climbing?

At 6 o'clock Neil Margetts (fighting swine flu of note) announced that it was time for the PETZL Rock and Road EC 2009 Prize Giving! With a fire blazing away in the massive hearth, the whole crew gathered with drinks in hand to bring the competition to a close. Neil thanked all the people, companies and climbers that have been involved with the PETZL Rock & Road, and his exhaustive list covered a ridiculous amount of names. It just goes to show that this event is community driven, and is of such importance to the SA climbing scene that people are happy to do their part in seeing its success.

PETZL came to the party to hand out prizes, with cash and new ropes (drool, drool) being among the booty. But the best part was when the trio of Ant, Gosia and Julia stood up to make some 'special' awards. The climbers had gone way beyond the call of artistic duty and made the raddest cards signed by everyone for Neil (who deserves a medal, a back massage and a crate of whisky for taking the event on), the Non-Stop Adventure Bus Driving team, Sally the Physio, T-Dawg the photo-guy, Derek Marshall the Super-Bolting Machine, the Ondra's and even the hack who kept bothering people for quotes.

Ending off with the news that the **Western Cape will host the PETZL Rock and Road 2010 Trip**, the party cracked off with a fantastic spit-braai, awesome salads and fresh food that the scurried climbers polished off in under 11 minutes. Adam Ondra climbs a 40m 8a in fewer than seven minutes; South African climbers destroy an entire sheep carcass in much the same time – both impressive achievements.

Two informal awards (the trophies, 340ml bottles of Windhoek) were made for the two surprise stand-outs of the trip or more popularly 'The Under-Dog Awards'.

These went to Ilse Labuschagne (GP) who came on the trip not seen as one of the stronger climbers, and turned around kicking serious arse, fighting and improving all the way. The boy version went to Ant Hall (WC), who came on the trip in a similar position to Ilse, yet impressed the hell out of the other climbers with excellent flash sends, and good route reading capabilities.

From there on out it was utter chaos. I think that the appearance of several bottles of OB's, a litre bottle of cheap-ass whisky, Jagermeister down downs and Andrew Pedley on a mission (now known in my books as the Master of Disaster...) could take 99% of the blame for the mayhem that ensued. But when you have Flex dancing in the flames of a raging fire with the best biker moustache ever, 10 dudes without their shirts on in 0°C temperatures (I still have no idea why they were doing that) and three girls having a '6-pack off' you know that there are darker forces at play.

Highlights for the evening included a game known as 'pile on', which was started after several enthusiastic people were moshing to Nirvana (blaring out of the Master of Disasters car) on the lawn. When someone yelled the words 'Pile On!!' the littlest member of the moshers was tripped and pinned to the floor by everyone else, with random people running from corners of the camp to jump on top of the human pile of torture. This was well received until Gosia was delivered a swift blow to the eye socket by he who shall remain nameless. Clearly it was accidental, but it did look a lot like someone had coloured Gosia's eye in with a purple permanent marker this morning.

In further entertainment, when it seemed that the roaring inferno wasn't hot enough anymore (it was only moderately like hell, as opposed to hotter than...) someone had the bright idea to go and collect a tree lying in the dry river bed about 500m away from the fire. I tell you what, it is quite a sight to see 15 headlamps bouncing through the pitch black night with comments like 'Jissie, bru, don't be such a dork, else I'm gonna shut you up with a klap to your head, just carry that thing and stop flippin' complaining' wafting over the grass.

In the end the tree made its way to the fire, but was so large that the back end formed a limbo pole, which started a whole new set of games that one shouldn't play when well over the limit. I now have a hole in my warmest jacket, and I have no idea how that happened. Okay so maybe I have some idea.

The PETZL Rock and Road is rad. It is THE climbing event of the year, and it has done so much for the level of climbing in SA that I truly think it merits serious support. I haven't seen people get on so well, seen such hard cranking or seen people pull together for the love of a sport in a very long time. It's inspirational, psych-inducing and important for the development of OUR sport in OUR country. Hell yeah.

And on that note, cheerio! Oh yes, for anyone who wants to needle Andrew...he was still asleep in his tent when every single other person left the last campsite. My bet is that he wasn't the best company for the drive to Montague...

(Ed's Note: This blog entry was taken from Kath Fourie's blog pages on <http://citysearch.yellowpages.co.za/blogs>

Click on Kath Fourie's name to get all her latest stuff. It's fun and funky (I think, I'm giving away my age – it's rad and sick).

Opinion

Role of competition climbing for the Mountain Club

By Diane Arvanitakis

August 2009

The MCSA Jo'burg section has endorsed different types of climbing challenges that have emerged within the Jo'burg and Magaliesberg sections.

The Roc Rally held in Waterval Boven – a more traditional approach to challenges using a handicap system – to the Rock 'n Road Show which showcases incredible performance climbing.

The National Bouldering League and the Gauteng Schools Climbing league give the necessary impetus to school goers whose schools offer climbing as an extramural activity.

The Rory invites multi-disciplinary participation in climbing (sport and bouldering) and hiking routes for anyone with some competency in climbing who competes on a level playing field with both amateur and 'professional' climbers.

It may not be that climbing events are the core business of the MCSA, but past experience shows that previous competition organisers are able to sustain the energy and commitment needed for approximately four years. It seems, it is MCSA members that are in general the proactive innovators who have conceptualised and implemented these successful climbing challenges. The MCSA Jo'burg section believes it is important to ensure the continuity of such competitive arenas by supporting these challenges both financially and now through the newly appointed manager allocated to the committee-run challenges specifically.

Climbing challenges are one of the key instruments in developing South African climbing locally and on the international map.

Climbing as an Olympic Sport is dependent on having a national team representative of each continent. The MCSA is the only African organisation that has consistently been represented at the Union International Alpine Association (UIAA) since 1992. This offers a platform, in the not too distant future, to form a South African national climbing team and lobby for inclusion of climbing as an Olympic Sport. A small portion of every MCSA member's fees are allocated to the affiliation fee to the UIA and sending our MCSA president to the annual conference ensures the voice of the developing countries of Africa and the world is heard.

As it turns out, a large number of those who participate in the climbing challenges are not MCSA members. The MCSA can commend itself on achieving its vision as stated in the Club Constitution - "actively fosters and facilitates mountaineering".

Perhaps members (and non-members) are unaware of the influence the MCSA has on competition climbing both nationally and internationally through:

- Sponsoring (bolting) materials for sport climbing routes to facilitate the sport,
- The skills capacity to set routes,
- The energy invested by MCSA members in executing climbing challenges,
- The investments into the necessary affiliations internationally to ensure that the Mountain Club of South Africa is a representative voice in the climbing world.

However, the MCSA and its members are not doing enough to promote the advocacy role the Mountain Club plays both nationally and internationally. It's not just about climbing. We are the de facto representatives of a large community using mountains and we should be active in activities pertaining to climbing, hiking, expeditions and conservation of our mountain heritage.

With the growth of the challenges, it may be necessary in the future to consider the implications for the MCSA in general.

The risks involved in administering challenges would be more appropriately carried by a separate 'section' where any risk would lie. It is also not unusual in international clubs (or any other competitive sport in SA for that matter, such as golf, diving, etc.) similar to this one, to demand that challengers in competitions / challenges are members of clubs. This would ensure that climbing standards are met and that those making use of the Club's investments are members of the Club.

Perhaps the MCSA's greatest failing is its humility in advocating the efforts all its members contribute to the facilitation of mountaineering in this country.

NEWS FLASH

Marc Caplan has kindly offered to assist to steady / secure some of the paths in Cedarberg and Tonquani.

Marc will give us an estimate of materials required. We ask members to join us in helping 'renovate' the path going down Cedarberg kloof, this side of the mouse hole. The BIG event to do this is 20 September. We need members with bakkies to transport some of the material and MANPOWER. Please let us know if you can help. We wish to look at other sensitive areas and get the paths in order. Prospective members are especially welcome. Phone Uschi 011 807 1310

MEETS: a request from Meet leaders

Please contact meet leaders by latest Friday evening if you wish to go on the Sunday's meet.

Where possible, please use e-mail addresses to 'book' for a meet.

GROOTKLOOF MB: On Saturday 22 August two permit holders were held up at knife point near the campsite at Grootkloof on the path to Sparkling Waters Hotel. Please be aware and on the alert when in the area.

GAUTENG SCHOOLS CLIMBING LEAGUE

The Gauteng Schools Climbing League will be welcoming all other provinces to the Nationals which will be held at Wonder Wall Friday 2nd October and The Barn Saturday 3rd October 2009.

This is the first time a national competition dedicated those climbers of a school going age has been held in South Africa.

We at the GSCL are totally motivated to bring huge changes to SA climbing and we want you there to share in it - your continued support this year has been awesome.

We want all climbers to join us in this climbing revival which can only bring benefits to SA climbing."

Neil Margetts

ST PETERS CLIMBING WALL.

St Peter's climbing wall has undergone a revamp and as from the 1st October MCSA members will be charged a discounted rate for the use of this facility.

MCSA members R35.00 per session

Non members R40.00 per session.

6 month subscription:

MCSA members R520.00

Non members R650.00

Contact Neil Margetts for further information

neil@gicscientific.co.za

EVENT : 28th October at the club evening

Former British Climbing Champion Anne Arran is one of the most talented climbers in Britain today. Whether she's onsighting bold E5 seacliffs in Wales, succeeding on fiercely hard 8a redpoints in France, or exploring huge unclimbed walls in the remotest corners of the planet, Anne's enthusiasm for hard and beautiful climbing is enormous. Anne is currently President of the UIAA Youth Commission and will be visiting South Africa with her husband John, one of the most accomplished all-round climbers in the world.

An account of the first ascent of "Rainbow Jambaia" which takes a direct line up the face behind Angel Falls in Venezuela. The face is 1000m high and overhangs approximately 60m in total. As such the climb is the biggest overhanging free-climb in the world. The team comprised John Arran, Anne Arran, Miles Gibson, Ben Heason, Alex Klenov (Russia), Ivan Calderón (Venezuela) and Alfredo Rangel (Venezuela). The 31-pitch route took 19 days to climb, with each team member spending 14 or more nights on the wall. The nine hardest pitches went at E7. Of these, five

were climbed entirely onsight, although one of these benefited from gear in place after the pitch was earlier aided. The other four E7 pitches were redpointed with the trad gear in place. All crux pitches were climbed by Miles, Ben or John in roughly equal measure.

The entrance fee will be R30.00 pp.

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