



**MCSA**  
**News**

Newsletter of the  
Johannesburg Section



## Newsletter November 2011

Welcome to the November edition of the Johannesburg Section newsletter.

**WISHING YOU ALL A PEACEFUL FESTIVE SEASON AND GOOD WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR**

### CLUB NEWS

**AGM:** The Annual General Meeting of the Mountain Club of South Africa Johannesburg Section will be held on **Wednesday 14 March 2012** at the Waverley Girl Guide Hall, cnr Scott & Stirling Streets, Waverley at 20h00. (Agenda to follow in due course).

**COMMITTEE:** a number of committee members have stepped down or are not available to continue on the committee.

It would be appreciated if members would make themselves available for these important portfolios: Land and Access, Bolting, Webpage Maintenance and other portfolios.

Our committee consists of the Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Land and Access; Conservation, Hut and Clubhouse; Sport Climbing; Bolting; Youth; Security/Patrolling; Search & Rescue; Expeditions, Meets; Legal; Website; Orientation.

Any volunteers are welcome.

### MEMBERS

**New Members:** We welcome new members: Louise Mackechnie, Tina Fatti, Marija Ojdanic, Susannah Cowen, Servaas and Petro Venter, Serelda Price, Greg Thompson, David Pentz, Bruno Poco, Richard da Silva, William Tyson and Charles Ackroyd.

**Members who passed away during 2011:** It is with regret and sadness that we report on those members who passed away during the year: Heiko Tillwick (January), Ken Wright (June), Horst Weiss, John Brittain and Jackie Botha (August), Veronica Smith (October), Liz Perry (November).

**Members, if you do not wish to retain your membership** for whatever reason (such as leaving the country or because you are no longer interested) **please notify us** before the end of December. If you do not you are still liable for next year's subs. We have to pay levies to Cencom based on the number of voting members as at 1 January each year. For budget purposes we also have to calculate expected income and expenses each year.

**Change of contact details:** please let us know if you change your email address, phone number or postal address.

**Subscriptions for 2012:** At the Committee Meeting held on 7 November 2011 it was agreed to increase subscriptions for 2012 by around 5%, as follows:

- Ordinary Single R525
- Married R790
- Country Single R400
- Country Married R500
- Students R260
- Juniors R130
- Family (children of members under the age of 13 years) R30
- Seniors (20 years membership and over the age of 65 years) R260

**Permits** for the areas we administer in the Magaliesberg remain at:

R35 per adult

R25 students

R15 for children under 13 years.

For other fees e.g. Wolkberg Hut and Hamerkop, contact Uschi Magg.

### THANK YOU

Thank you to members who made **donations** to our various projects as well as to those members who help at conservation and youth meets, our meet leaders, the Search & Rescue team and committee members for their hard work.

### EXPEDITIONS:

#### **Dobek Pater**

I'm thinking of putting together an expedition to Denali in May / June 2012. The objective would be to climb Denali via the standard route. Participants would be free to stay in Alaska after climbing Denali to climb other peaks in the area, hike, fish, wrestle brown bears, drink local moonshine or whatever, if they so wish. If you are potentially interested in a trip of this nature, please let me know either by e-mail ([dobek@africaanalysis.co.za](mailto:dobek@africaanalysis.co.za)) or phone on 083-306-2306. At this point, I'm sending out a feeler to gauge the level of interest and have not yet done any preliminary preparations for the trip.

### MEETS INFORMATION ON MCSA WEBPAGE AND FACE BOOK

#### **Ulrike Kiefer**

We want to create an information base for venues that the Johannesburg section visits during their climbing and hiking meets. This information will be stored on the JHB webpage and a link in Uschi's reminders will bring you to the respective place in the data base. The information provided will include a short description of what to expect, like trad climbing, sport climbing, pools for swimming, camp fires allowed etc as well as have a few pictures. The general area will be given, e.g. Magaliesberg, and an approximate travel time. Access details will not be included. To our long standing members this might not be important, but our newer members will have a way of familiarising themselves with our venues.

I am looking for someone with some knowledge of our kloofs and country venues who is capable of compiling this information within an acceptable time frame. I am hoping for 90% completion by end January. JHB section will pay an agreed upon amount for the completed job.

If you are interested, contact Ulrike at [ukiefer@icon.co.za](mailto:ukiefer@icon.co.za) or Uschi at [admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za](mailto:admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za) or on 011 807 1310 (8-10am).

We now have a facebook page "Mountain Club Jo'burg Section MEETS". All upcoming meets will be posted there. It is an open group that anyone can join. Please go there, check it out, let us know what you want to see there, arrange lifts to the meet place and post your stories.

### LAND & ACCESS:

**Patrollers needed:** We need patrollers, especially over the festive season. If you are able to patrol at Cedarberg / Tonquani, please contact Uschi or alternatively, just patrol.

**Tonquani South:** We regret to inform you that Glen Easton, the Manager of Askari Lodge and the area where MCSA members park, passed away very suddenly. We are awaiting further information on our access and will let you know as soon as possible what the new arrangements will be.

Access via **Utopia** (members only), please contact Uschi or Erik.

**Mountain Sanctuary Park:** members, remember to show your membership card. You may take one guest. Parking fee of R30 payable. Permit holders: MSP's daily entrance fee applies plus parking fee.

**A parking fee of R30** per car applies to Calabash, Trident, Mhlabatini and Wilgepoort.

### ARMED ROBBERIES AND ASSAULTS IN THE MAGALIESBERG

#### **Dobek Pater**

There have been a number of criminal incidents in the kloofs of Magaliesberg over the past year or so and unfortunately this trend currently appears to be on the increase. The incidents have involved theft of property and armed assault with knives, affecting MCSA members and non-members. The most affected kloofs are the Tonquani / Cedarberg complex and Grootkloof.

We would like to let you know that both the Johannesburg and the Magaliesberg Section general committees are taking this matter very seriously and have initiated steps to counter this infringement on our freedom in the hills. To this end, a Security Portfolio was established at the Johannesburg Section earlier this year, tasked with the development of a strategy of how best to prevent such criminal activity in the future and make the Magaliesberg climbing areas once again secure for our enjoyment. We are currently investigating a number of options and hope to be able to begin putting plans into action before the end of this year.

Until such time as the crime situation has been resolved, we strongly advise all our members venturing into the kloofs to take the following precautionary measures, in order to limit the possibility of becoming a victim of crime:

- Be aware of your surroundings and cautious of any unidentified individuals that approach you.
- Go to the kloofs in larger groups (e.g. 6 – 8 people or more).
- Limit the number of valuables you take with you. e.g. take an old cellphone rather than a fancy smartphone for emergency situations.
- If possible, leave valuables and car keys with lodge staff / the parking lot attendant.
- Carry pepper spray / mace with you.
- Carry a whistle and sound an alarm in case of trouble or perceived trouble to warn others around you.
- Avoid camping in the kloofs, particularly at campsites that are easily accessible (e.g. the Grootkloof campsite or Twiddle Dee Twiddle Dum).

These safety tips apply to all the climbing areas in the Magaliesberg, and not only Tonquani / Cedarberg the Grootkloof.

We look forward to returning our climbing and hiking venues to places of tranquillity and enjoyment.

#### **'A CALL TO ARMS'**

##### **Grant Rens**

Several incidents of muggings and break-ins have in the last few years affected MCSA members on MCSA land. Currently the people patrolling the properties of Mountain Club land in the Magaliesberg and elsewhere (Johannesburg and Magaliesberg Sections) are unable to even enforce permit violations, never mind do anything about armed trespassers. MCSA members are seen as soft targets.

##### **What can be done about this?**

At this point we need to analyse this issue and investigate our options. Several ideas have been proposed in a joint brainstorm session of the JHB and Magaliesberg Security Subcommittee's, one of which is a more formalised patrol. What has worked well was when some members of the MCSA who are police reservists went out to have a look. Not only is this a visible response that will be communicated far and wide but it also shows that the MCSA is not toothless (which is the unfortunate perception by some).

Naturally we do not want to spend our lives patrolling the lands endlessly. We would rather be climbing. But no response or a feeble response will more than likely encourage more victimisation of MCSA members. This is not public property. It is private land, so trespassing is an arrestable offence. We owe it to ourselves and our members to be able to use the MCSA land in safety and without fear of attack. Yes, there are multiple strategies that we can put into effect but one of these must certainly be a presence on our land.

So the proposal at this time is for a formalised patrol unit, using people such as the police reservists and others skilled in similar areas to set up a regular patrol.

At this point in time the approach would be to request if any of the members would be willing to be involved in such a patrolling unit. Once this has been determined as a way forward and is seen to have enough support to proceed these members would then undergo a training phase and thereafter we would start implementing the patrols on an irregular basis.

Should this approach be seen to be effective after an initial assessment period, then there would probably be a call for more volunteers & a further training phase.

##### **So what can you do?**

1. Let us know if you support this approach.
2. Let us know if you would be willing to commit to being involved in this programme.

If you choose to support the programme it would require a certain amount of commitment. A commitment in terms of time will be involved in two aspects:

- Training: there will be a certain amount of training involved. This will be restricted to designated training courses but will involve occasional weekends or day courses.
- Patrolling: the patrols will only take place on weekends. The patrolling will be on an irregular basis and undertaken on different properties at different times to maximise the effect that the unwelcome intruders will not be able to predict the Patrollers presence. The envisaged initial regularity would be a patrol every 6 weeks, though initially the intensity may be more often. Once a few full strength patrols exist we can set the patrolling gap accordingly.

##### **How can you respond to all of this?**

1. Send a reply to the Chairman (Dobek), Uschi or myself ([grant.rens@centurionsystems.co.za](mailto:grant.rens@centurionsystems.co.za); 082 353 9662) in response to whether you think this idea is worthwhile pursuing.
2. Let us know if you would be willing to help.

Doing something about being victims on our own land is up to us. We must decide what we want to do in response to this.

To this end I have the following request: Please could anyone who has any information on incidents of theft or robbery whilst out climbing in the Magaliesberg or general area of the MCSA Johannesburg or Magaliesberg Sections activities please provide this information to Uschi or myself in such a way that we can examine this information in aid of preventing such incidents from occurring again. In this regard it does not matter when the incident occurred or who it was reported to, as we are looking at re-examining it for trends or patterns. If you have such information please email it to us, preferably with the date, time, general location, what occurred, who the perpetrators could have been, the exact description or location of the actual incident and any further information you may deem relevant, along with your contact details.

We would be very grateful to you for your assistance in this regard.

#### **COURSE ON SECURITY IN THE VELD:**

##### **Mark Grobbelaar, January – February 2012**

Mark Grobbelaar gave a very interesting talk on the psychological side of security [not self-defence] geared to the outdoors [in the veld, kloofs, hiking routes], on Wednesday 23 November. Unfortunately not many members attended the talk.

Mark is offering to give a course on this subject. It will be over 5 weeks, once a week for an hour. The course is normally R950 but he is offering it to the club for R475 per member.

We are all concerned about security issues in the Magaliesberg and elsewhere and want to know how one can react / should not react, what to do / not to do and how one can learn to quickly assess a situation, etc. Mark has adapted his course specially for the MCSA and will take into account situations in outdoor / remote places. He is happy to teach men and women together. Normally where people do not know each other he gives the course to the sexes separately, but he reckons we are mature enough to be taught together – after all, we are in the veld together and would have to know how to react together.

We would like to arrange to have Mark give us this course and need as many members as possible to do the course – to be mentally aware and prepared. Please make use of this opportunity that Mark is offering.

Please let us know **asap** whether you would like to do the course. Once we have numbers we will contact Mark to discuss the dates, but we would like it the sooner the better. Perhaps end January / February. We would have it at the club house on Wednesdays.

If there are too many for the first course, I am sure we can persuade Mark to do more. For those of you who did not attend the introductory course, please speak to someone who did, or contact Grant/ Uschi for more information.

#### **LAPEL BADGES:**

At the Kathmandu UIAA GA AGM, Dave Jones (MCSA President) observed that the newest fashion in international climbing / mountaineering circles is to wear little lapel badges with the logo of the country club / federation. These badges are exchanged as souvenirs.

The suggestion is for MCSA to have an order of badges with the MCSA logo manufactured. These can then be purchased by sections / individuals from Cencom. These badges could also be given as gifts to speakers at the various sections or club events and the like. The cost of manufacturing such badges would need to be established.

#### **WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MCSA**

1. Environmental presence as a representative body to preserving mountainous environments
2. Bolting of new areas and access to Sport climbing crags which make sport climbing possible and safe
3. Access to pristine land in the Magaliesberg and other areas for hiking, climbing & conservation of these environments
4. A Search & Rescue wing of the MCSA which works in co-operation with the SA Air Force and is one of the most highly respected volunteer rescue organisations in the country.
5. National Access to Mountain Club huts countrywide (available from the MCSA admin offices)
6. Discounts from various retail outlets on presentation of a valid membership card:

10% @ Drifters Sandton City and Capetown,

10 % @ Trappers trading Fourways and Northgate, 5% @ ventures for africa in Cresta, 5% @ Cape Union Mart stores (speak to the store managers)

1. Annual organised Camps & Meets for both sports climbing and trad
2. An annual MCSA Journal. Johannesburg Section and national newsletters, keeping you up-to-date on developments in the climbing community in SA.
3. A website with references to route guides to various MCSA locations
4. Security guards subsidised & provided with the necessary backup @ a few sport climbing venues
5. A dedicated Orientation programme which introduces new members to use of climbing equipment & safe climbing practice
6. A dedicated Youth Programme to introduce young members to the outdoors & activities of the climbing.
7. International expeditions planned and co-sponsored by the club
8. Access to international climbing (rock and ice) meets.

9. Club evenings at the club house with captivating slide shows / talks on the climbing adventures and achievements by our club members.
10. Training events held at the club house, e.g. first aid related or climbing-related.

#### **OF INTEREST**

The Hartebeestfontein Conservancy was established in 2002 as a Voluntary Association. The Conservancy falls in the valley between the top of the Magaliesberg and the top of the Witwatersberg, and borders the core zone of the Cradle of Humankind. If you would like to find out more please go to [www.hartebeestfonteinconservancy.org.za/](http://www.hartebeestfonteinconservancy.org.za/)

The website carries information on alien vegetation, animal species in the Conservancy, bird life, trees, recycling, and even handy tips on how to naturally handle insect bites and get rid of flies.

#### **Snakes**

*Helen Perry*

Your item on the cobra spit reminded me that I've been meaning to let people know that my brother got spat in the eye by a Mozambiquan Spitting cobra near the Hamerkop house. According to the snake book only two South African cobras actually spit - the Mozambiquan Spitting and the Rinkhals (which isn't actually a cobra). But the important information is that the Mozambiquan Spitting cobra is most likely to spit from its hiding place amongst rocks and seldom rears up to spit. If you get spat on your arm or leg DON'T start looking for the snake because the next spit will be in your eye.

My brother was looking at a rather innocuous brown snake (+- a meter long) hiding amongst some loose rocks. He actually saw it opening its mouth and spitting. He washed his eyes out immediately and according to the doctor was lucky to be wearing contact lenses which prevented a full blast of poison onto the cornea. The treatment - in addition to immediate rinsing with water (or, in an emergency, any other liquid) - is a quaterzone/anti biotic eyedrop to prevent ulceration of the cornea. He returned to the UK a few days later and had to have a check-up. Apparently it was the first time that the ophthalmologists at the Gerards Cross Eye Hospital had to look at a Spitting cobra injury. All was fine.

#### **MOUNTAIN DAY CELEBRATIONS 4 DECEMBER**

The KZN Section of the Mountain Club of South Africa, will be hosting this year's International Mountain Day celebrations for South Africans at Cobham EKZN Reserve in the Southern Drakensberg from 3 – 4 December 2011. More information can be obtained from Bruce Tomalin [bruce.tomalin@mondigroup.co.za](mailto:bruce.tomalin@mondigroup.co.za) and one can book for the various activities through Bruce too!

**FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE CLUB CONTACT:** Uschi Magg (Administrator) Tel: 011 807 1310 weekdays 8am – 10am. Email: [admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za](mailto:admin@jhb.mcsa.org.za)

<http://mcsa.org.za/jhbjoom/>

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