

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2019

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1. PRESIDENTIAL MUTTERINGS

We are once again reaching the end of a “Club year” in that most sections are holding their AGMs and renewing/replacing their committees – with greater or lesser success! The general paucity of volunteers tends to become an issue at this time with people often ducking and diving to avoid being nominated! Unfortunate as helping to run this great Club is a privilege and should be sought after – as indeed it used to be.

The National Committee is of course no exception. The overall make up is relatively easy – the Chairs of all the individual sections make up the bulk but there remains the somewhat thorny issue of the Executive Committee... The three executive posts – President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected separately from the main body and are responsible to that main body and to the Club in general.

Why am I setting all this out here and at this time? Well, at this stage, it looks like the present ExCo will be re-appointed and while continuity is a good thing in general, it does mean that soon or later the proverbial will hit the fan and replacements will have to be found.

Personally, I believe – and I have always said – that term limits are no bad thing. Consequently, while I am willing to stay on for one more year, if the Club so decides, that will be it! I am way past my sell-by date in any event.

What the Club may consider however, is the system employed at a number of other clubs world-wide – notably, the Alpine Club and the American Alpine Club – where the outgoing President after his term in office of four years, remains *ex-officio* on the Committee to provide that important continuity. We might want to consider that system in the future. It would require a (hopefully minor) change in the constitution but may well be worthwhile.

On a similar subject, there was an attempt a few years back to set down in writing, a “strategic plan” for the Club. While this attempt was abortive (for a number of reasons) it was a valiant try to bring us into the 21st century – and it is one that I will be working on over the next 12 months – together with a small working group. So keep your heads down guys!!

I have had the privilege over the last few years of representing both the country, as Club President and the continent of Africa as the Continental Representative for Africa on the UIAA Management Committee. This has also meant an involvement with the “politics” of

mountaineering in general and specifically, the UIAA. Sounds dull and boring doesn't it? Well, it certainly is not! It has proved to be fascinating and allowed us, as a relatively insignificant association at the southern tip of Africa to be involved in world mountaineering affairs. It may seem a little esoteric but in fact with the UIAA's new strategic plan (in development) it will hopefully mean that we can be involved in some of the more pressing issues that we face on planet earth. These include research into climate change, developmental aspects (think outreach), education and research into safety in the mountains.

While all this is going on, climbing world-wide continues to grow in popularity with all the problems and opportunities that that brings. Here in South Africa, we are somewhat of a special case (aren't we always!) in that we have a large unequal society in an area that is likely to be greatly affected by climate change and the other factors I mentioned earlier. This gives us great opportunities to get it right! Or to get it wrong...

Reading Journals from other clubs around the world – I have just received the NAZAC Journal – it has been brought home to me just how much “adventure climbing” is still taking place around the world. While the advent of satellite imagery and other means of research appears to make the world a smaller and more confined space where ‘we know everything’, it is clear from the climbing activities that go on that it is far from a fact that “everything has been done”.

I think every generation believes that it has missed out (FOMO again!) on the more exciting times – I know I did when I read of Shipton and Tilman's exploits – but then I have (thankfully) managed a climbing career that has encompassed real exploratory work. Some of it at the behest of the aforementioned Shipton and Tilman. In my dotage(!) I am still pushing for people – Club members – to do their thing in an expeditionary sense and get out into country that has never or only rarely been visited. Sadly, the current emphasis on ‘instant gratification’ appears to have limited the number of people who are interested in getting “out there” and doing new things. One certainly does not have to be on the sharp end of technical climbing to be expedition-minded. There is a lot to do for the moderate – but competent – climber. Try this for size:

ASIAN ALPINE E-NEWS

Issue No. 47 February 2019

Saipal III 6922m & Saipal chuli 7031m

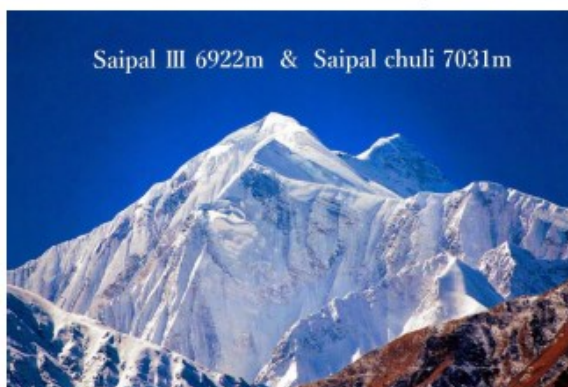


Photo: Kaori Inaba

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Enough! You won't have to read many more of these streams of consciousness – if any of you do now! – but I hope that at the end of my term in office, I can look at the Club and say that it is in a good place.

I have quoted this before but I think it bears repeating:

*“We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with Snow”*

2. WUPPERTHAL FIRE APPEAL

While the recent disastrous fire at Wuppertal in the Cederberg may be receding from our minds, the situation for the people of the village remains critical. Members from all Sections of the MCSA who have ever enjoyed the Cederberg are encouraged to assist the people there. The following gives the necessary information:

“Recognising the long standing association that Members of the Mountain Club of South Africa have had with the broader Cederberg Community, and with the residents of Wuppertal in particular, we urge those Members who would be able to render assistance to the Wuppertal Community, to please make whatever contributions you can, directly via the official Wuppertal Fire Relief system, as is explained in the attached link: <https://www.fruitful-futures.com/wuppertal-fire-relief/#prettyPhoto>.”

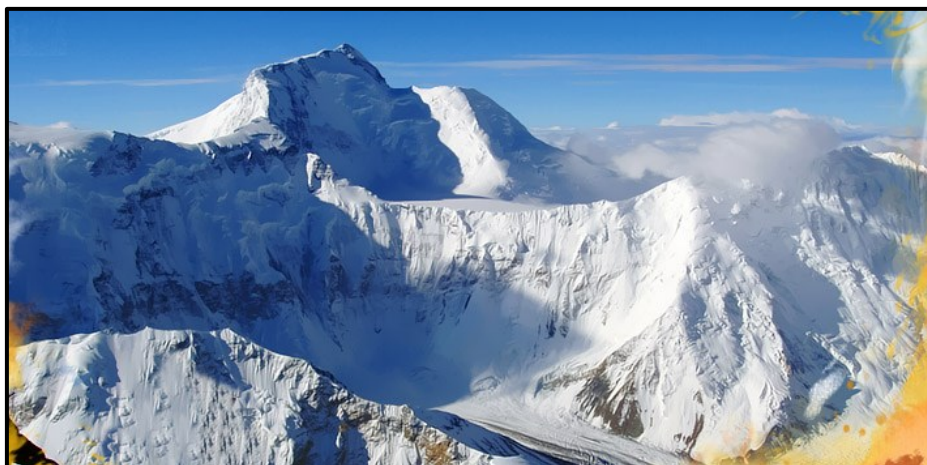
3. JOURNAL 2019

Please start thinking about the 2019 Journal well ahead of time and prevent the angst always felt by the editor!

Contributions can be sent to the Editing Team to: jennyapaterson@gmail.com Please refer to the Guidelines and Style Sheet on the national website before you submit any contribution: these can be found on the following link: <http://www.mcsa.org.za/home/journal>

4. PLANNED EXPEDITION TO THE PAMIR MOUNTAINS, CENTRAL ASIA

Two members of the Johannesburg Section are planning a trip to the Pamir Mountains of Central Asia this year. If you are interested in joining this trip, please contact Dobek Pater on dobek@africaanalysis.co.za or tel. 083 306 2306 and indicate your preference. A few options are being considered as set out below.



Ismoil Somoni Peak (Pik Komunizma)

At 7,495 m, this is the highest peak in the Pamir Range. It requires a good level of technical skill in snow / ice and glacier mountaineering, and good ability to acclimatise within a relatively short period of time.

Travel dates to Ismoil Somoni Peak are restricted as the most efficient way of reaching base camp is to fly in on a scheduled helicopter flight. There are only two flights in the summery climbing season. Therefore, the dates of the expedition could be either 5 July to 27 July 2019 (departing from and arriving back in Johannesburg) or 2 August to 24 August 2019. Because of these scheduled flights, the window to climb the mountain is quite short – two weeks – which leaves no room for additional acclimatisation or poor weather conditions longer than 1 – 2 days. Effectively, it means you already need to arrive in base camp partially acclimatised and physically fit. There is an option to stay longer on the mountain, but the members organising this trip have only approximately three weeks leave at their disposal.

Estimated cost for the total trip is R37 000 to R40 000, excluding own incidental expenditure. (This is based on pricing available at the end of January 2019 for an Emirates flight, quite a bit less expensive than a Turkish Airlines flight and an exchange rate of USD 1 : ZAR 14.50.) There is an option of hiring a guide or even high altitude porters, although we do not foresee a need for this. Note that costs could be higher for the earlier trip date (above) as according to one guide, we may be the first party in base camp and may need to lay our own fixed ropes on part of the route. This could be an additional cost (ropes + anchoring equipment). Also, as the first party on the mountain, we would be doing much of the breaking of accumulated snow. This, plus setting up of fixed ropes, introduced time delays to an already short timeframe.

Ibn Sina Peak (Pik Lenina)

This is a lower peak, at 7,134 m and much easier in terms of technical requirements. It is the second highest mountain in the Pamir Range on the Tajikistan / Kyrgyzstan border. The classic climbing ascent routes are on the Kyrgyz side. The main challenge on this mountain is altitude, and possibly avalanche and inclement weather (as could be the case on any mountain).

Travel dates – during July 2019, most likely from 5 July to 27 July 2019 to maximise the weekends. The date could be moved one week either way.

Estimated cost for the total trip is approx. R30 000, excluding own incidental expenditure. (This is based on pricing available at the end of January 2019 for an Emirates flight to Bishkek and an exchange rate of USD 1 : ZAR 14.50.) The price also depends on modes of transport chosen in Kyrgyzstan. There is an option of coming in from Tashkent in Uzbekistan.

Other Peaks

We can also consider other peaks in the region, such as Muztagh Ata in China or Khan Tengri in Kyrgyzstan. The cost will be higher than Peak Lenina and they may require more time.

Also, if you have been to any of the above peaks and can impart valuable intel, please contact Dobek.

5. KAMCHATKA, RUSSIA - 7-21 JULY 2019

In 2018, Ulrike Kiefer led a small group to Kamchatka. Her recent presentation elicited a lot of interest. All members of the group said what an amazing trip it was.

Her Russian contact is thinking of doing a similar trip in June 2019 – a lighter trekking in Kamchatka for 7-21 July 2019: there is no glacier walking, a detour to another valley, an extra volcano climb and included the boat trip: he is offering a €160 early booking discount off the quoted price until the New Year. Also worth mentioning that Aeroflot direct flights for summer 2019 are not available yet so the current flight prices should not be a deterrent.

Go

to:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1R6OmRKqkXAdr0MsqUxEOkIpcp70Tb_0JJZ4b2nty9J8

6. FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB/MCSA JOINT MEET 2018

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club is the oldest and largest climbing and mountaineering club in the north of England based in the Lake District. It was formed in 1907 and currently has over 1 100 members. The MCSA enjoys reciprocity rights with the Club.

On 11 November 10 members of the FRCC arrived in Cape Town for a 3 week joint meet with the Cape Town Section of the MCSA. The meet was intended for "mere mortal climbers" which was later clarified to mean British Grades Hard Severe to E1 (South African 13 to 19)

The Meet was very successful with climbing and hiking taking place on Lion's Head, Table Mountain Paarl Rock, Montagu and Gordon's Bay.

A joint Meet in the UK is planned for 2020.

7. UIAA



7.1 GENERAL

The UIAA continues to develop its services for members and will be improving its members page to offer federations the opportunity to exchange more details about climbing and mountaineering in their own countries. A Donate page will also be available to members who wish to showcase initiatives and causes they are supporting. Both projects will be rolled out during the first quarter of 2019.

Members are therefore reminded of many existing resources, and some new ones, provided by the UIAA. This includes the newly-launched online rock and ice climbing festival search tool (see below), a UIAA platform which offers federations the chance to promote events in their region. The UIAA Safety Standards, high-altitude medical advice, training standards and mountain protection projects continue to evolve, providing expertise at the benefit of members and entire climbing and mountaineering community. Expertise which comes directly from the valuable volunteer efforts of UIAA Commission members, nominated by UIAA member federations worldwide. Members are encouraged to go to <http://www.theuiaa.org/> to find out more about the UIAA's important activities.

7.2 SLACKLINERS JOIN THE UIAA COMMUNITY

No, not slack-packing! The International Slackline Association (ISA) has been voted in as an Observer Member of the UIAA.



Founded in 2015, the ISA aims to support and develop the international slackline community, protect access to the sport, enhance communication and informational resources and increase the safety of all forms of slacklining worldwide. The Association counts ten national governing associations and federations as active members encompassing 55 regional and national associations or clubs. This totals some 2,000 slackliners, growing quickly.

[Slacklining entails balancing on a 2.5 to 5cm wide piece of webbing made from synthetic fibres, which is rigged between to fixed points, often trees. Slacklining is an independent sport with many alpine and urban variations and disciplines, championships and professional athletes.]

7.3 2019 MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD IS OPEN

Since 2013, the UIAA Mountain Protection Award has showcased **106 projects** from **over 30 countries**. The platform has enabled initiatives to receive international recognition and much-needed funding. It has provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and share best practices. Investment generated by the Award has helped projects advance in meeting key targets such as building infrastructures to improve the lives and conditions of mountain people and communities.

The annual Award is open to initiatives, projects and associations whose activities are directly related to mountaineering and mountain-based sports and in parallel who demonstrate an engagement and collaboration with local communities to develop a culture of mountaineering activities and initiatives that are both sustainable and that attract and inspire visitors.

7.4 SANDSTONE INTERNATIONAL CLIMBING YOUTH CAMP

Registration is now open for the Sandstone International Climbing Youth Camp in Ostrov u Tise, Czech Republic. The event which is affiliated with the UIAA Youth Commission is open to youngsters between the ages of 12-18. Participants will be able to challenge themselves on one of the most famous sandstone climbing areas in the world.

Dates/ Location:

11.08-17.08.2019 Ostrov u Tise, Czech Republic Ostrov 10, 403 36 Tisá, Czechia. **Tel:** +420 475 222 013

Participants/ Activities:

Open to ages 12-18. Please note that participants should be able climb with rope (top rope), should be autonomous for managing belay and be able to abseil autonomously.

The main goal of this youth climbing camp is to practice unique, specific forms of sandstone climbing on what is spectacular terrain for rock climbing with great friction qualities as well as chimneys and cracks.

Price:

150 EUR per participant, via bank transfer. Participants should also be insured for accident, rescue, third party liability and travel. A copy of each insurance should be presented to the organisers on arrival.

Accommodation:

Accommodation will be provided at the camp Autokemp pod Císařem. Participants will be housed in small bungalows but please be advised that it is necessary to bring your own sleeping bags.

Contact:

The camp is organized by five national associations. For more information please contact Magdaléna Jančíková from the Czech Mountaineering Association. **Email:** magda.jancikova@horosvaz.cz

Registration Deadline:

Registration closes on 31 May 2019. A deposit of 75 EUR is required by this date, with the rest of the payment to be paid in full by the 01 August.

7.5 UIAA/SAFETY STANDARDS/CERTIFIED EQUIPMENT

The Certified Equipment database comprises a public search function which allows mountaineers, climbers and all interested stakeholders to look for UIAA Safety Label certified products available in the market across all accredited brands and manufacturers. Go to <https://www.theuiaa.org/safety-standards/certified-equipment/> for the search engine.

7.6 UIAA / MOUNTAIN MEDICINE / ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The UIAA Medical Commission produces comprehensive recommendation papers, translated into several languages, which act as a valuable resource for climbers and medical staff alike. While an emphasis is put on health problems that occur at high altitude, there are many useful tips in the library of papers. Among the issues included are acute mountain sickness, nutrition, water disinfection and drug use and misuse in mountaineering. Go to <https://www.theuiaa.org/mountain-medicine/medical-advice/> for the full library.

8. FACEBOOK AND WEB PAGES

8.1 National: abbreviated link for the national MCSA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MCSA125/

8.2 Links for all the sections' web pages are on the MCSA national webpage.

9. NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

Please send any newsworthy items for inclusion in MCSA National News Editor, Ineke Moseley at: inekemos@zsd.co.za

10. SNIPPETS

10.1 Free Solo. Alex Honnold was on hand at the Academy Awards to watch the film *Free Solo* win the Oscar for best documentary. Before hand however, he sat down for this interview with Gear Patrol to talk about the experience. To listen to the interview:

<https://adventureblog.net/2019/02/video-at-the-oscars-with-alex-honnold.html>

10.2 Winter climbing season in the Himalayas

<https://adventureblog.net/2019/02/winter-climbs-2019>. This site is updated regularly and covers most of the expeditions this year, explaining how the weather affects many of the schedules that have been prepared beforehand.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"Never noticed a female monkey not climbing as well as a male, have you?" Don Whillans, upon being asked if it was possible for a woman to be a better rock climber than a man.