

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2019

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1. PRESIDENT’S PIECE

I was unsure whether to call this the “President’s Piece” or the “President’s Peace”! It certainly will be a piece of my usual quarterly ramblings but it will also be moving towards peace of mind as I draw to the end of my presidential term. I always said that four years would be about right and so it is proving...

It is a fact that one - or me, at least - becomes less effective after a certain time and for me that has always been about four or five years in any “volunteer” position. After that one reaches one’s sell-by date and needs to get out before you are pushed out! But there is always the unfinished business that one regrets...

Personally, I am attempting to leave my successor with some tangible “benefits” in the form of projects which I have initiated or advanced – and some which have been abject failures which will need some serious TLC to revive! That will always happen!

Lately, I have become much more involved with the UIAA with a view to helping repair what I see as a broken system in various parts of the world. Some of you (hopefully) will have seen that there have been a couple of UIAA initiatives concerning Everest and Kilimanjaro with statements giving the UIAA position on the issues involved. These initiatives have largely been kick-started by the MCSA and it has earned us brownie points in various circles.

The UIAA working group on high mountains and their exploitation is currently under MCSA chairmanship and we hope to be able to positively influence the authorities in at least two countries to start setting things right when it comes to at least two of the “seven summits”. While one solution – by any government body - is to raise prices as a means of limiting numbers and raising revenue (think SANParks!), the UIAA hopes to persuade these bodies that there are other ways to manage mountain areas. It will require a lot of hard graft (Oops! Wrong word!) and diplomatic lobbying but we are convinced that there are other ways.

It will also require some serious re-education of the public, notably the adventure tourism sector, that going up Mount Everest is no longer the feat that it obviously once was. Hauling yourself up fixed ropes after your Sherpa guide and porters carrying everything you need is not mountaineering by any stretch of the imagination! Equally, trudging up Kili with a retinue of guides and porters is not mountaineering. Yes, I have a hobby-horse. And yes, I am firmly in the saddle at the moment and I will be until my period in office is over – and probably even after that!

Locally, I have been fortunate that a number of the critical issues have over the years been solved by my predecessors or other passionate individuals. Thus, we have been spared via

ferratas in the Drakensberg, the Magaliesberg has been preserved largely unspoiled, the Hex River mountains remain an unspoiled wilderness. We have also “lost” a few along the way but then progress will happen and we must learn to manage it and not merely fight it!

But mostly, over the years, I have just been so grateful that I “discovered” the mountains at an age when I could optimise my experience. My timing was a little off – I should maybe have been active in the 1930s! – but even so, being able to be on Kili and Mount Kenya as the only party, having the enormous privilege of being the only party in the Fitzroy area for six weeks(!), trekking into Tierra del Fuego, just the three of us! Special times indeed.

I need to stop before I become too maudlin! There is still an enormous amount of work to do to protect the mountains and the way of life that we love. And, personally, I intend to keep on working at that while I still have the strength and the mental(!) capacity...

2. 2018 JOURNALS

The 2018 Journals are about to be shipped out to the Sections so they should be available for distribution shortly.

We owe a vote of thanks and congratulations to the Editor, Jenny Paterson – well done Jenny!

3. MCSA STANCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The MCSA has put out a statement regarding climate change. This is available on the National website. Comments and suggestions are welcome! Here is the link: <https://mcsa.org.za/2019/05/11/the-mcsas-stance-on-climate-change/>

4. KZN SECTION CENTENARY

This year the MCSA Annual Dinner is being combined with the KZN Section’s Centenary Dinner. Details are on the invitation (below).



5. AAC TO HOST 12TH INTERNATIONAL CLIMBERS’ MEET

The American Alpine Club is hosting its 12th annual International Climbers’ Meet (ICM), to be held the week of 13-19 October, 2019 in Yosemite Valley. The event will include three days of education programming, host climbers available for guidance, and, per usual, an international cast of characters that will be crushing Yosemite.



Applicants should have intermediate or advanced level experience with:

- Placement and removal of protection
- Multi-pitch rope management
- At least two years of technical rock climbing
- The ability to follow sustained 5.8 granite

Participants provide their own transportation to Yosemite Valley, California. A full roster will be sent to all participants for coordinating ride sharing.

Discounted fee for International participants:

Early-bird fee until 31 July is \$495 USD per person.** Beginning 1 August, the fee will be \$545 ** Your fee includes:

- Seven nights and six days of camping at secluded Yellow Pines camp ground.
- Three gourmet catered meals per day from Sierra Gourmet catering.
- Six days of climbing in spectacular Yosemite Valley.
- Three optional instructional days hosted by AMGA certified guides and instructor.
- Pre-dinner mini-clinics on a range of technical topics.
- One day of stewardship for Yosemite National Park.
- Nightly campfire for storytelling, socializing, and general carousing.
- Partner with other participants or experienced host climbers.

6. UIAA

4.1 GENERAL

The UIAA continues to develop its services for members and will be improving its web 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.



Members are encouraged to go to the UIAA web site <http://www.theuiaa.org/> to find out more about the UIAA's important activities.

4.2 UIAA WORKING GROUP - TACKLING HIGH MOUNTAIN ISSUES



In May and June, the UIAA published statements in response to two significant climbing stories. The first was related to the 2019 Everest climbing season, the second proposals to construct a cableway up Kilimanjaro. The two statements received significant international media coverage. A key message in both statements was the UIAA's willingness to work with stakeholders and help find solutions.

The MCSA has taken a leading rôle in the setting up and functioning of the Working Group with your President heading the group which includes some heavyweight climbers.

4.3 2019 UIAA MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD - MEET THE CANDIDATES

The UIAA has published profiles of all 12 projects in contention for the 2019 UIAA Mountain Protection Award. There will be four prizes offered this year. The Award winner, granted 5000 USD, will be announced together with the runner-up and best new initiative at the UIAA General Assembly in Cyprus on 2 November. A fourth prize is the new Community Award, which will be run through the UIAA Facebook channel, and recognise the project which creates the highest engagement. All projects will be showcased on the UIAA website and social media channels. Visit the Project page:

<https://www.theuiaa.org/mountain-protection-award/2019-uiaa-mountain-protection-award/>

It is hoped that an MCSA project might be included next year!

4.4 2019 UIAA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The annual UIAA General Assembly is the largest, and most important, gathering of UIAA member federations, commissions, representatives and partners. At the General Assembly, key decisions are made concerning UIAA's role, its activities and budget and elections are held. The 2019 UIAA General Assembly will be hosted by the Cyprus Mountaineering Climbing & Orienteering Federation (C.M.C.O.F) and held on 2 November.

The MCSA, via the President will be in attendance.

4.5 RESPECT THE MOUNTAINS PROGRAMME - SUNDAY AFTERNOONS RENEWS PARTNERSHIP

A global leader in technical hats that offer superior protection from the elements, Sunday Afternoons has been redefining what headwear can do for over 25 years. Oregon-based and family-owned, the company has signed on with the UIAA Respect the Mountains (RtM) project to help preserve and protect mountain ecosystems globally. As an official partner, Sunday Afternoons is committed to raising awareness about the RtM movement and will offer sun-protective headwear for sale at events and tradeshow to raise funds for UIAA sustainability projects. Details on RtM events taking place worldwide are available to view on the recently-launched UIAA RtM calendar.

See more about this on the UIAA website.

4.6 UIAA/DAV BELAY VIDEOS UPDATE – ADVISORY

In April 2019, the UIAA and the DAV (German Alpine Club) collaborated on a series of videos dedicated to belaying. Ten videos produced by the DAV were translated into English with the support of the UIAA Safety Commission. These videos are available to view on the UIAA Skills page. An additional video, how to belay with the ATC, was not posted. It is now available following the publication of an advisory courtesy of the UIAA Training Panel.

5. FACEBOOK AND WEB PAGES

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

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

6. NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

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

7. SNIPPETS

There are many items of interest in August 2019 newsletter of the Mountain Research Initiative:

7.1 Snow algae thrive in High Mountain Ice Spires.

<http://www.mountainresearchinitiative.org/index.php/news-page-all/112-global-news/2351-snow-algae-thrive-in-high-mountain-ice-spires>

7.2 Mont Blanc

As climate change causes an increasing level of physical alterations to routes on Mont Blanc, it is taking its toll on mountaineering in the region. We talk to researcher Jacques Mourey about the geomorphological changes occurring on the mountain's established climbing routes, and the new and evolving challenges climbers are facing as a result. <http://www.mountainresearchinitiative.org/index.php/news-page-all/112-global-news/2363-new-challenges-for-mountaineers-on-the-mount-blanc-massif>

7.3 Oldest known High Mountain Settlement discovered in Ethiopia

A rock overhang at almost 3500 meters in today's Ethiopia was permanently settled by Stone Age hunters over 40,000 years ago – making it the oldest known prehistoric dwelling in a high mountain range. This is according to a new study published in the journal *Science*.
<http://www.mountainresearchinitiative.org/index.php/news-page-all/112-global-news/2362-oldest-known-high-mountain-settlement-discovered-in-ethiopia>

7.4 Peru's ancient water systems vs modern systems

Peru's ancient water systems can help protect communities from shortages caused by climate changes. Water is essential for human life, but in many parts of the world water supplies are under threat from more extreme, less predictable weather conditions due to climate change. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Peruvian Andes, where rising temperatures and receding glaciers forewarn of imminent water scarcity for the communities that live there.

<http://www.mountainresearchinitiative.org/index.php/news-content/latin-america/peru-s-ancient-water-systems-can-help-protect-communities-from-shortages-caused-by-climate-change>

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"If you don't take care of yourself, the best equipment in the world can't prevent frostbite"

Jonathan Waterman, from *Surviving Denali*